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An Examination of the Lubell Thesis: A Statistical and History Study of the McIntosh County, North Dakota, 1936-1940

Thomas J. Cummings

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE LUBELL THESIS: A STATISTICAL
AND HISTORICAL STUDY OF MCINTOSH COUNTY,
NORTH DAKOTA, 1936-1940

by
Thomas J. Cummings

Bachelor of Science, University of North Dakota 1970

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty
of the
University of North Dakota
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

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This Thesis submitted by Thomas J. Cummings in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

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Department History

Degree Master of Arts

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Date July 28, 1972

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

North Dakota is often referred to as the leading isolationist state in the Union. The vociferous opposition expressed by the state's people to World Wars I and II is cited as proof for this label. One explanation for the state's behavior, advanced by Samuel Lubell, stresses ethnic origin. According to this view, the German-Russian population of the state is responsible for making North Dakota an isolationist stronghold. This study of one German-Russian county, McIntosh county, is an attempt to examine the validity of Lubell's ethnic explanation. In particular, this study focuses on the reasons for the rejection of Franklin Roosevelt in 1940 by the McIntosh voters.

The procedure involved a detailed study of McIntosh county from 1936 through 1940. This period covers the years prior to World War II, years when isolationism was a powerful sentiment in the nation. It also marks the period when the effects of the Great Depression were the severest in McIntosh county.

The results of the 1940 election in McIntosh county can be traced to a number of sources. Traditional Republicanism, economic revival, hostility to war, influence of newspaper opinion, and the influence of state politicians all played a role in the political decision of November 5, 1940, in McIntosh county. Although people of the county were isolationists, this study does not find their isolationism to be ethnically motivated.

CHAPTER I

THE LUBELL THESIS

The study of voter behavior is a relatively new field of study. One of the pioneers in that field is Samuel Lubell. In his book, The Future of American Politics, Lubell analyzes the coalition that brought Franklin Roosevelt to the Presidency and which has kept the Democratic party the majority party in America since 1932. Perhaps the most interesting section of Lubell's work concerns his treatment of the role of isolationism in American politics.

After a study of election returns from 1916 to 1964, Lubell concludes,

The hard core of isolationism in the United States has been ethnic and emotional, not geographic. By far the strongest common characteristic of the isolationist-voting counties is the residence there of ethnic groups with a pro-German or anti-British bias. Far from being indifferent to Europe's wars, the evidence argues that the isolationists actually were oversensitive to them. This ethnic factor emerges even more strongly in World War Two. Throughout the country in 1940, Roosevelt's proportion of the major party vote dropped roughly 7 per cent from 1936. There were twenty counties where his loss exceeded 35 per cent--five times the national average. Nineteen of these counties are predominantly German-speaking in background.¹

Lubell summarizes his findings by saying there are two factors responsible for American isolationism: "First, the existence of pro-German and anti-British ethnic prejudices. Second, the exploiting of these prejudices by an opposition political party."² Lubell then turns his

¹Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics, Harper Colophon Books (3rd ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 133.

²Ibid., pp. 134-35.

attention to the ethnic group he considers to be the most isolationist-- the Russian-Germans. Noting that this group is found in Nebraska, Kansas, North and South Dakota, and Washington, Lubell singles out North Dakota for special attention:

North Dakota has the heaviest concentration of Russian-Germans and they have been a major factor in keeping it the most isolationist state in the Union. McIntosh County, for example, gave the Democrats the smallest percentage of the vote in the whole country in 1920--only 4 per cent--and showed the highest Democratic drop in the nation in 1940--48 percentage points. The number of Roosevelt voters fell from 1,900 in 1936 to 318 in 1940.

The Russian-German counties were also the backbone of Senator Nye's political strength. Of the thirteen counties Nye carried in 1944, twelve were counties where Roosevelt suffered his heaviest losses in 1940. From these same counties has come the margin of victory in the Republican primary for Senator William Langer, one of the thirteen Senators voting against the North Atlantic pact.³

Lubell finds two reasons for the isolationism of the Russian-Germans. First is their traditional opposition to military service: they went to Russia when Catherine I promised them exemption from conscription and left Russia when that promise was broken. Second is their cultural isolation--"ethnic islands in the American Sea" as Lubell puts it--which resulted from their clannish habits.⁴

How have Lubell's ideas been received? Two political scientists have made similar studies, and both men found the German-Russian factor to be as Lubell has described. Louis Bean compared Democratic losses in the 1940 election with counties having a German population and reached the same conclusion as Lubell: The higher the concentration of

³Ibid., pp. 146-47. The term Russian-German is interchangeable with German-Russian, commonly used in North Dakota. This paper will use the second term.

⁴Ibid., p. 148.

people of German origin, the greater the loss in Democratic support. He found this shift in support had given the Republicans a majority in North Dakota in 1940.⁵ V. O. Key also studied the 1940 election, and he too found a correlation between persons of German origin and a shift to the Republicans. Key also mentions North Dakota as the prime example of this shift. He feels this shift was caused by either the pacifism of the people of the state or their dislike for Roosevelt's strong stand against Hitler.⁶

Presenting strong statistical support for Lubell is a quantitative study by Robert Cherny. Cherny studied twenty-eight counties in eastern Nebraska during the 1940 election, correlating ethnocultural and economic factors found there. He uncovered four trends from his statistical project:

(a) the German stock citizenry was unique in the degree of correlation between ethnicity and changes in voting behavior relative to the 1940 presidential election, (b) a significant shift from Democratic to Republican voting behavior took place among the German stock citizenry in 1940, (c) this shift was directed more at Roose-

⁵Louis Bean, How to Predict Elections (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), pp. 96-97. Bean was concerned when he first looked at his statistics because of the low number of Germans in the counties that had shifted support to the Republicans. He noticed the large number of people of Russian origin in these counties and could not figure out why these Russians should have reacted as they did. In desperation, he talked with someone who knew North Dakota and was told, "They are not Russians. They are Germans. Their schools are German, their newspapers are German. They are descended from Germans who migrated first to Russia and later to the United States. That is why the census lists them as Russians."

⁶V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties & Pressure Groups (5th ed.; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964), pp. 533-34.

velt than at the Democratic party, and (d) this anti-Roosevelt voting resulted from concern with foreign policy issues.⁷

Cherny appears to have arrived at statistical proof for Lubell's thesis.

But he adds in his conclusion,

there are indications that the German stock counties had begun a slow drift into Republican voting patterns before 1940. This drift, attributable in part to the absence of ethnic issues from 1930 to 1940 and to the beginning of the structural assimilation of German Stock areas into the traditionally Republican political system of the state as a whole, was greatly sharpened and accelerated by the events of 1940.⁸

This addition would seem to qualify Lubell's thesis somewhat.

Lubell's thesis has also found support among leading American historians. Alexander DeConde believes the isolationism of the German-Americans "was based on an ethnic reaction to American foreign policy and on blood and cultural ties to the Old World."⁹ DeConde also discounts the importance of geographic insularity and ignorance of international affairs as sources for isolationism and concludes, "ethnic concentration offered a better explanation for Midwestern isolationism."¹⁰ Dating the origins of western isolationism from the free silver days of Bryan, Ray Allen Billington gives first and second generation Americans a leading role in the development of support for isolationism. He singles out two groups in particular: "Germans who disliked to make

⁷Robert Cherny, "Isolationist Voting in 1940: A Statistical Analysis," Nebraska History, LII (Fall, 1971), 304.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Alexander DeConde, ed., Isolation and Security (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1957), p. 12.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 13.

war on the Fatherland and Scandinavians who brought from the Old World a strong tradition of isolationism."¹¹

Two students of North Dakota history have made special note of the German-Russian relationship uncovered by Lubell. William Sherman concludes that, to the German-Russians, "Roosevelt's followers, as Wilson's administration had done a generation before, seemed to be seeking war with Germany. But even more, this meant a return of conscription which to the German-Russians had always been a dreaded eventuality."¹² Also commenting on the ethnic relation within the political shift of 1940, Sarah Gold claims that traditionally, "most of the German-Russians have supported the Democratic party to a greater extent than has the rest of the state"¹³; in 1940, however,

the German-Russians considered the Democratic party a party of war and as the party of conscription; both Democratic characteristics were strongly antithetical to the German-Russian beliefs and historical antecedents in Germany and Russia. It was not pro-German feeling, and obviously not anti-Soviet feeling that prompted the election returns of German-Russian counties in 1940, but anti-war and anti-conscription feeling.¹⁴

¹¹Ray Allen Billington, "The Origins of Middle Western Isolationism," Political Science Quarterly, LX (March, 1945), 63-64.

¹²William C. Sherman, "Assimilation in a North Dakota German-Russian Community" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1965), p. 90. (Hereafter cited as Sherman, "Assimilation").

¹³Sarah M. Gold, "German-Russians in North Dakota: Their History and Politics" (unpublished Senior Honors thesis, University of North Dakota, 1967), p. 34. (Hereafter cited as Gold, "German-Russians").

¹⁴Ibid., p. 40.

Thus Lubell's ethnical theory has received influential support from the intellectual community. This is not to say that his contention has been unchallenged.

One reviewer of The Future of American Politics said Lubell, "too cavalierly, perhaps, disposes of what he calls 'The Myth of Isolation.'" ¹⁵ Another reviewer, sociologist Bernard Fensterwald, agreed with Lubell that

the presence of a high percentage of German-Americans, concentrated in the area, living in rural communities, existing in cultural isolation, and being opposed to the two world wars would all tend to give the area an isolationist and antiwar flavor.¹⁶

Fensterwald goes on to say, however, that other factors besides national-origin determine isolationism, factors such as ruralism and religion. He concludes that if Lubell's ethnic thesis is correct, German-Americans would be very enthusiastic about NATO and the rearmament of Germany, "but you will not find this to be the case today."¹⁷

Another attack upon the ethnic thesis of isolation was written by Dr. Robert Wilkins, professor of history at the University of North Dakota. Wilkins states that North Dakota's isolationism "has its roots

¹⁵Henry R. Graff, review of The Future of American Politics by Samuel Lubell, in Political Science Quarterly, LXVII (December, 1952), 624.

¹⁶Bernard Fensterwald, Jr., "The Anatomy of American 'Isolationism' and Expansionism. Part I," Journal of Conflict Resolution, II (June, 1958), 135.

¹⁷Ibid.

in economic and psychological conditions always characteristic of the frontier, in the political ideologies of certain portions of the population, and in a general attachment to the cause of liberalism."¹⁸

Remarking that the consistent opposition to both world wars by North Dakotans is generally seen as pro-German sentiment, Wilkins focuses his attention on Lubell:

Samuel Lubell, one of the most widely-read writers on the subject of isolationism, subscribes to the latter [pro-German] view. But a survey of the forty-odd years, 1914-1956, may lessen the force of the contention that North Dakota's isolationism stems from sympathy with Germany. . . . It would appear from this survey that there is much more to North Dakota's isolationism than sympathy with Germany. Certainly the prejudices against Eastern business classes and interests as well as the belief that wars, while to the advantage of the rich who promoted them by act and word, had to be fought by the poor, was equally important. For, noticing that preparedness and a strong line with Germany were advocated by the East, a great many of the people of the state immediately opposed them.¹⁹

In another article, Wilkins adds two other factors to North Dakota isolationism; the rural nature of the state and the lengthy public careers of politicians who became prominent before World War I and who served into the 1940's and 1950's.²⁰ Wilkins summarizes his views in another article on the same subject:

But perhaps a more telling argument against the claim that isolationism is based on pro-German feeling is in its continuation in North Dakota into the post-1945 period. These years produced the same arguments against war, the same attempts to conscript wealth. The North Dakota Congressional delegation after 1945 was as vociferous

¹⁸Robert P. Wilkins, "Middle Western Isolationism: A Re-examination," North Dakota Quarterly, XXV (Summer, 1957), 69.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 71-74.

²⁰Robert P. Wilkins, "The Nonpartisan League and Upper Midwest Isolationism," Agricultural History, XXXIX (April, 1965), 109.

in its opposition to the foreign policy measures of the national administration as were its counterparts of 1914-1917 or 1935-1941.²¹

Manfred Jonas expresses even stronger reservations about the validity of the ethnic thesis. In his book, Isolationism in America, Jonas discusses the 1940 election; after deciding German-Americans voted for Willkie because of his German name, rather than because of his foreign policy views, Jonas declares, "American isolationism was obviously not limited to a single geographic area or one major political party and cannot be considered merely the product of the prejudices of large ethnic groups."²² Jonas uses Washington's Farewell Address as an example of the weakness in the Lubell Thesis. Lubell had stated American isolationism rested partly on an anti-British bias; Jonas shows the Farewell Address, a document which established American isolation, to be anti-French in flavor. Jonas decides the ethnic thesis is "more useful for explaining the support given isolationist candidates by many German-Americans and Irish-Americans than for revealing the bases of the movement itself."²³

Michael Sponberg comes to the same conclusions as Wilkins and Jonas. He examined the Korean War and its effect upon North Dakota opinion:

As noted above a great number of German and Scandinavians, outspoken isolationists in the two World Wars, opposed America's participation in the Korean "police action". The enemies were Asiatics--not Germans--but the German and Scandinavian element of the population

²¹Robert P. Wilkins, "The Non-Ethnic Roots of North Dakota Isolationism," Nebraska History, XLIV (September, 1963), 220.

²²Manfred Jonas, Isolationism in America (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 20-22.

²³Ibid., p. 19.

held vehement anti-war sentiment similar to those voiced earlier in the century. As noted above many Germans and Scandinavians opposed Universal Military Training and the eighteen-year-old draft. The Korean War with its demand for a three million man army was anathema to those whose ancestors had fled Europe to escape military service. It would seem that a very great number of North Dakotans oppose all wars, whether the war was fought against an imperialistic Kaiser, Nazi aggressors, or Asiatic Communists.²⁴

Leroy Rieselbach, a political scientist, deals the most telling criticism to Lubell's thesis. Rieselbach made a voting record study of seventy-six Congressional representatives who had sufficient proportions of German and/or Irish stock in their constituency to make them responsible to the demands of that constituency. He tested both the rural-midwestern hypothesis and the ethnic hypothesis of isolationism. He finds that

neither of them fully explains the feelings against the expansion of American commitments overseas. The traditional rural-midwestern theory has pinpointed the Midwest as the hard core of isolationist strength, attributing this to ruralism and a psychological security resulting from geographic insularity. We have seen that there is only moderate correlation between isolationism and rural population, and that nonentanglement feelings, although strong in the Midwest, are equally strong elsewhere. The ethnic approach also has some merit. . . . However, the data collected here indicate that the representatives of districts populated by Americans of German and Irish ancestry vote isolationist less than half the time, and some do not do so at all. There is evidence also that districts with negligible German and Irish stock, such as some New England and Midwestern Republican and Southern Democratic constituencies, consistently support the policy of nonentanglement. . . . Of the factors responsible for isolationism, the most important seems to be the neglected complex we termed Republicanism-conservatism. . . . The fact that conservatism is strongest in the Midwest and represents a fair number of rural districts and quite a few constituencies with a goodly proportion of people of German and/or Irish ancestry

²⁴Michael Sponberg, "North Dakota and the Korean War, 1950-1951: A Study in Public Opinion" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1969), p. 215. (Hereafter cited as Sponberg, "North Dakota and the Korean War").

may be the principle cause for the deficiencies in the traditional and ethnic-emotional theories.²⁵

Are there some overlooked factors in the 1940 campaign that Lubell's critics and supporters have ignored? Writing in 1939, Arville Schaleben, a reporter for the Nation, predicted reverses for the Democrats in the North Central States in the coming election. He found the mood of the people set against Roosevelt's New Deal:

The people are sick of unemployment and economic strife, tired of relief, and sour with disappointments. They do not relish the Republicanism which they forsook in 1932. They will not return to it joyfully. They will turn to it only for a change.²⁶

Turning his attention to North Dakota, Schaleben predicted,

the state would go against the New Deal, but something may happen to keep it in the Democratic column. Big wheat prices might do it; war in Europe might do it; collapse of the present Republican state administration might do it; heavy federal farm subsidies might do it. But I do not believe any of them will.²⁷

Writing in September 1940, another reporter echoed Schaleben's views. Charles Munz, a writer for Nation, analyzed why the Midwestern farmers had abandoned the Republican party in 1932 and why they were returning to it in 1940:

This year the farmer is voting, not for tomorrow, not even for today, but for yesterday. . . . the hard and paradoxical fact that it is the farmer's considerable success in achieving his goals under a Democratic Administration that now causes him to abandon the Democratic Party and return to the Republicanism in which he was nursed. The Middle Western farmer--especially the leading farmer. . . is willing to support a liberal administration in Washington only when he is badly scared. On all other occasions he is conservative

²⁵Leroy N. Rieselbach, "The Basis of Isolationist Behavior," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIV (Winter, 1960), 655-56.

²⁶Arville Schaleben, "This is America II. The North Central States," Nation, June 17, 1939, pp. 690-91.

²⁷Ibid., p. 692.

almost to the point of being reactionary. In 1932 the farmer was thoroughly scared. . . . So the farmer voted for Roosevelt. But since then the farmer has seen his circumstances change remarkably for the better. . . . Freed from the fear of losing his homestead, the farmer is thinking of many other problems besides those that are strictly his own. Like all Americans, he is thinking of national defense and foreign policy. Here he tends to be an isolationist, often an extreme one. He is thinking also of the national debt--and especially of labor policies and unemployment relief. Here he is conservative.²⁸

In its postmortem the New Republic noted the Democratic reverses in the Middle West and reasoned that the voters there were protesting the drought; they also felt,

that the New Deal made the farmers sufficiently prosperous so that they felt they could afford to return to their normal habit of mind. Every one of these states went Republican in 1928, 1924, 1920 and most elections before that back to the Civil War.²⁹

Samuel Lubell's ethnic thesis was devised to explain the voting behavior of the German-Russians. In particular this theory was applied to the German-Russians of McIntosh county, North Dakota. The German-Russian people are noted for their conservative views, their individualism, and their adherence to tradition. Lubell has added one more trait to that list of characteristics, a profound hatred for war with the Fatherland. Lubell believes this antipathy explains the political reverse in McIntosh county in 1940. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the conditions, attitudes, and politics in McIntosh county that led to the reversal of 1940. Before entering into that study, a few observations about the county are in order.

²⁸Charles Curtis Munz, "Will the Farmer Vote for Willkie?" Nation, September 7, 1940, p. 186.

²⁹"What the Election Proved," New Republic, November 18, 1940, p. 680.

McIntosh county lies midway between Minnesota and Montana on the center of the border separating North Dakota-South Dakota. It is forty-two miles long and twenty-four miles wide. The county's gently rolling terrain includes numerous lakes and a rich subsoil; two-thirds of the land is classified as undulating, with the other one-third labeled rolling.³⁰ The agricultural prospects in this section of Dakota Territory proved sufficient enough to attract a hardy breed of pioneer in the 1880's. One early settler of this region remarked on the possibilities of the land when he wrote, "The soil is a rich mold, varying in depth from eighteen inches to four feet, with clay subsoil, and is the same kind which in other parts of the territory produces from fifteen to thirty-five bushels of No. 1 hard wheat to the acre. . . ." ³¹ The attraction of cheap, fertile land enabled the county to grow rapidly in the succeeding years: in 1890 the county population was 3,248; by 1910 it was 7,251; and by 1930 it had reached 9,261.³²

The settlers were predominantly of foreign origin. Of the 7,251 people in the county in 1910, 6,222 were listed as foreign-born or

³⁰McIntosh County Land Use Planning Executive Committee, Land Use Planning for McIntosh County, North Dakota, August 25, 1942, p. 6. (Hereafter cited as Land Use Planning).

³¹Paul P. Orth, McIntosh County Herald, November 12, 1884, cited in Nina Farley Wishek, Along the Trails of Yesterday: A Story of McIntosh County (Ashley, North Dakota: Ashley Tribune, 1941), p. 10.

³²Nina Farley Wishek, Along the Trails of Yesterday: A Story of McIntosh County (Ashley, North Dakota: Ashley Tribune, 1941), p. 40. (Hereafter cited as Wishek, Along the Trails). Mrs. Wishek incorrectly lists the 1910 population as 7,351.

having foreign-born parents. Of this 6,222, there were 5,745 listing Russia as their homeland or their parents' homeland.³³ Who were these Russians, and why did they come to this remote section of the United States?

These settlers were descendents of the Schwaben people of southwest Germany. Fleeing religious persecution in their homeland, these people migrated to South Russia in 1815 upon the invitation of Czar Alexander I.³⁴ The Czar promised the Germans tax exemptions, retention of their German citizenship, and most important to these pacifistic people, exemption from military conscription. Whole villages moved to Russia, taking few material goods with them.

Everything went well for the emigres until Czar Nicholas I revoked Alexander's concessions. He ended the Germans' tax exemption, told the Germans they had to become Russian citizens, and most alarming of all, ordered them into his army. Unsure about their future in Russia, the Schwaben people sent several young men to America in the 1860's to seek a new refuge. These scouts came to Dakota Territory and found what their people had long sought--rich soils and uninhabited lands. Their favorable report started the last great Schwaben migration. This exodus covered the last part of the nineteenth century, and involved groups of

³³U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population, III, 352.

³⁴The Germans settled in two regions, one on the lower Volga and the other in Bessarabia and around Odessa. The German-Russians of North Dakota came from this second group. E. Schuldheisz, "The German Russians in North Dakota" (unpublished seminar paper, University of North Dakota, 1950), p. 2. Catherine the Great extended the original invitation to come to Russia, but the Germans did not migrate until Alexander was Czar.

two's and four's, families and whole villages.³⁵

These settlers established Hoskins as the first town in what was to become McIntosh county. Other settlements established were Ashley (which became the county seat when the settlers of Hoskins moved there in 1887), Lehr (located in both McIntosh and Logan counties), Wishek, Danzig, Zeeland, and Venturia.³⁶ The best summary of the settlers' experiences in the county is found in Along the Trails of Yesterday, a book about the county written by Nina Farley Wishek. Mrs. Wishek relates how these early pioneers often battled with prairie fires, droughts, and blizzards.³⁷

Through the early years the county experienced steady growth and relative prosperity. Then came the boom years of World War I, years when everyone received bountiful rewards from the land. After the war, prosperity faded, and the farmers struggled through the depression years of the Twenties. But the hardship of these years was only a portent of things to come in the Thirties. The crash of the stock market coincided

³⁵T. R. Baudler, "Who Are They?" Ashley Diamond Jubilee, Ashley, North Dakota: 1888-1963, ed. by Max Wishek (Fargo, North Dakota: Richtman's Printing, 1963), pp. 608. One author gave the following migration figures for the German-Russians who came to Dakota Territory: 1887-1888, there were 9,000 emigrants; 1889-1890, there were 3,000; and 1891-1892, there were 4,500. W. S. Harwood, "A Bit of Europe in Dakota," Harper's Weekly, July 11, 1896, p. 690. (The Jubilee book is hereafter cited as Ashley Jubilee). For another account of German-Russian life in North Dakota, see Joseph B. Voeller, "The Origins of the German-Russian People and Their Role in North Dakota," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1940).

³⁶Ashley Jubilee, p. 15.

³⁷Wishek, Along the Trails, p. xiv.

with the beginning of the drought on the prairies. Coupled with the dry weather was a further decline in the already low farm prices. By 1936, the worst year of the Great Depression for the residents of McIntosh county, many found themselves concerned not with turning a profit, but rather with merely surviving.

During the late Thirties, the McIntosh area was served by two papers, the Ashley Tribune and the Wishek News, as principal sources of county news. The Tribune was edited by Walter Froh and the News by Robert Greiser. The papers covered all of McIntosh county, and parts of Emmons, Logan, LaMoure, and Dickey counties.³⁸ In addition to the immediate area, the papers reached readers in California, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Minnesota, and the prairie provinces of Canada. The papers usually ran a weekly editorial, a comic section, various farm ads, letters to the editor, national, state, and local news. Bob Greiser printed occasional racial jokes about Blacks and Jews, but Froh refrained from this practice. Both papers carried the views of the state's Republican party, the News being a staunch supporter of the Nonpartisan

³⁸The population of the two towns and circulation of the papers were:

	Ashley ^a	<u>Tribune</u>	Wishek	<u>News</u>
1936	680	1,050	690	1,225
1938	678	1,012	688	1,100
1939	687	914	696	1,225
1940	698	1,545	707	1,038

^aN. W. Ayer & Son's Directory: Newspapers and Periodicals 1936 (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Son, Inc., 1936). The other data came from the 1938, 1939, and 1940 editions of the Directory. The city population totals listed are considerably under the official totals of the census reports; the 1940 census figure for Ashley was 1,345 and for Wishek, it was 1,112. U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940: Population, Vol. II, pt. 5, p. 505. The table shows the effects of the depression--when conditions were worst, the papers had their lowest distribution.

League (NPL) branch of the party, and the Tribune representing anti-League politics. The split in political loyalties between the two editors served as the basis of the feud between them.³⁹

The hard times of the Depression caused both editors to covet all sources of potential advertising. This struggle for existence was the source of the election contests between the papers seeking the title of official county newspaper, since the official paper also became the official county printer. Without a doubt the major topic of both papers throughout the period 1936-1939 was the deteriorating agricultural condition of the county. This was natural since the major economic activity of the county was farming. The concern focused on three factors: destructive natural forces, the growing relief problem, and financial hardships. The agricultural crisis of 1936-1939 would play a decisive role in the political reverse of 1940. To understand that role, the aforementioned factors must be analyzed.

³⁹In later years the old wounds apparently healed, as Walter Froh related fond memories about Greiser when asked to talk about the Wishek editor. Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

CHAPTER II

CLIMATE, PESTILENCE, AND ATTITUDES

To appreciate the hardships the McIntosh farmer endured in the late 1930's, one must realize the influence of the environment on the land and on the farmer himself. The chief natural deficiency throughout the depression was moisture. The year 1936 is cited as the coldest, hottest, and driest ever recorded by the state.¹ The normal rainfall from January through June in Ashley is 9.19 inches; in 1936 the total for this period was 3.95 inches.² The lack of rain caused crops to burn and businesses to suffer. Future governor John Moses observed, "All this talk about business recovery is poppycock and poppycock of the most infantile and assine kind. There can be no recovery, no lasting recovery in the Northwest until we get rain."³

Heavy snows during the winter of 1936-37 brought welcome relief to the parched soils of McIntosh county. The abundance of the powdery moisture blocked roads to such an extent that the county was almost closed off to the rest of the state. The opening of the highway through

¹Elwyn B. Robinson, History of North Dakota (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 398. (Hereafter cited as Robinson, North Dakota).

²Wishek News, July 27, 1937, p. 1. Ashley and Wishek both average 18.96 inches of precipitation per year, with half usually coming in April, May and June. Thus, when this period of the year is dry, there is little chance to raise a marketable crop. Land Use Planning, p. 6.

³Letter from John Moses to B. J. Loss, n.d., John Moses Papers, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, University of North Dakota, Folder 2.

Ashley was recorded as the major event of the winter by the Tribune. The opening of the roads had almost immediate effect upon the town's business, and some stores reported an increase of 50 per cent in their sales.⁴

At least one major business, the Ashley bakery, did not survive the hard winter. The Tribune attributed this loss to the practice of buying bakery goods in Bismarck and chided its readers lest more closings result from similar practices.⁵

Another group that suffered during the winter was the livestock breeders. The snow covered all ground forage and blocked the roads leading to the elevators where feed was stored. One writer noted that "feed is so high when a person has to buy that you cannot afford it, especially when money is so scarce."⁶ Though the people had suffered during the winter and in the years before, the Tribune sought to bolster the spirit of its subscribers to meet the challenges of the coming year. The paper commended the people for their generosity and unselfishness during the depression years; the paper felt this "New Spirit" would see the people out of the hard times.⁷

⁴Ashley Tribune, March 11, 1937, p. 1.

⁵Ibid., January 14, 1937, p. 1.

⁶Mrs. Otto Zimmerman to the Ashley Tribune, January 21, 1937, p. 8.

⁷Ashley Tribune, January 21, 1937, p. 4. Throughout the desolation years of 1936, 1937, and 1938, both county editors preached an optimistic philosophy to their readers in hope that they could convince the people not to give up. Whenever natural disaster struck, both Froh and Greiser would expound the virtues of the land and the opinion that the hardships would not last forever.

A late winter blizzard seemed a Godsend. Remarking how some farmers had questioned even planting a crop for 1937, the Tribune reported these same men were "now ready to go to work with hope-filled hearts."⁸ The hope for additional moisture was dashed as April brought high winds, dust storms, and no rain to the farmers of McIntosh county. The high winds blew away what had been planted, costing the farmer his precious seed. Hoping to encourage the disaster-stricken farmers, Bob Greiser told his readers, "This section of the state has produced wonderful crops in the past and will do it again. You sit tight and you'll win the battle."⁹ The most severe dust storm hit the county during the last week of April. Extending across the entire county, the storm made travel impossible, caused farm work to come to a standstill, and darkened the skies to midnight blackness at high noon. To raise morale in the face of this latest cruelty of nature, the Wishek paper ran a report from the state meteorologist, Ocris Roberts. He had surveyed the moisture conditions in the state and found "the farmers in this area and all over the state for that matter, have a fine seed bed to work on... and that prospects for a crop are the highest in years."¹⁰

⁸Ibid., March 25, 1937, p. 8.

⁹Wishek News, April 22, 1937, p. 1. In another editorial, Greiser said, "Sure its painful, but let's grit our teeth and take it." Ibid., April 29, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰Ibid., April 29, 1937, p. 3. The Ashley paper also felt conditions looked favorable: "Indications for a good crop still look bright. Timely rains will make it a reality. We firmly believe that they will come and that our country around here will stage a real comeback." Ashley Tribune, April 29, 1937, p. 1.

The periodic rains continued in May and into June, but not enough fell to insure a good crop. The life-giving moisture stopped in June, and by the middle of July the land had returned to the parched condition of earlier summers.

As the farmers began to fight the dry spell, a new menace arrived to plague them. Wind-borne grasshoppers swept into the county in the last week of July and soon infested every field and garden for hundreds of miles. They were so numerous that fence posts became invisible to the eye, as the hungry pests devoured the wooden sticks.¹¹ They attacked the wooden siding of McIntosh homes, even slipping inside through damaged spots. They were often squashed on county highways by passing cars, and soon the roads became too slippery for safe travel.¹² The Tribune called the infestation, "one of the worst grasshopper scourges ever experienced here."¹³ To make matters worse, the county was running low on hopper bait. The county agent urged "those who need it should get it at once and if more is needed such facts should be made known to the county commissioners."¹⁴

The combination of grasshoppers, high temperatures, and drought, ended all hope of a crop for 1937. Sensing the discouragement present in the farm households throughout the area, Bob Greiser tried to propagandize the virtues of the land in an interview with a retired Baptist

¹¹Interview, Christian Gross, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹²Interview, Fred Maier, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

¹³Ashley Tribune, July 22, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁴Wishek News, July 1, 1937, p. 1.

minister. Reverend August Heringer had lived in the county fifty years and still had faith that the land would recover. Greiser wrote,

In 50 years he [Heringer] had seen good years and bad years; of course he has not seen a continued dry spell like we have had the past five years, but he believes better times are ahead and is convinced North Dakota is the state for the man of moderate means and the man who wants to get a start in life. We have large areas of fertile and level land, all we need is moisture and the time is coming when we will have that again.¹⁵

The winter of 1937-38 was again an extremely severe one for the farmers, their families, and livestock, which the poor crop of 1937 made seem even worse. The harsh weather also affected the county's businessmen adversely. One man wrote, "Times sure are changeable. 15 years ago we had a boom, then a depression, now a recession and confusion. I wonder whether confession is going to be next?"¹⁶ Writing to Governor Langer, Mrs. Frank Schumader of Zeeland stated the businessman's distress quite well. She told Langer that he had done much to help the farmer, but had done little for the merchants of the state; she asked him, "Why not do something for us, who have helped the farmers for years. We need help as bad as any farmer in N. Dak."¹⁷

Winter retreated and the first warming days of spring turned everyone's attention to planting. The fickle weather stayed warm and dry throughout April and May, causing some concern over the subsoil

¹⁵Ibid., September 16, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁶Dr. H. K. Walth in the Wishek News, March 3, 1938, p. 1.

¹⁷Mrs. Frank Schumader to William Langer, April 15, 1938, William Langer Papers, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, University of North Dakota, Box 72, Folder 11. (Hereafter cited as Langer Papers).

moisture situation.¹⁸ Late May through June brought the badly-needed precipitation to the drying soil. One freak storm dumped over two inches of rain on the Ashley area, causing the Tribune editor to remark,

Whether or not the rain did more damage than good is hard to say, but its typical of North Dakota to be extreme about everything. Extreme heat, extreme cold, extreme drought, extreme showers, extreme worms, extreme grasshoppers--not to mention extreme politics.¹⁹

The fields grew rapidly and just when it seemed as though the farmers would finally get a crop, the grasshoppers returned in greater strength than in 1937. The desperate farmers tried burning the edges of their fields to smoke the pests away, but to no avail. Their homemade bait of molasses and DDT also proved ineffective. When all the crops had been eaten, the migrating hoppers pushed northward, leaving a barren land in their wake.²⁰ The county had supplied five boxcar loads of hopper bait from May 26 to June 6, with 75 per cent kill in some areas, yet the pests kept multiplying.²¹ At the height of the plague Walter Froh remarked, "The little devils are hatching by the millions and possess gluttonous appetites at birth."²² The News approached the effect

¹⁸Ashley Tribune, May 12, 1938, p. 1.

¹⁹Ibid., June 9, 1938, p. 1. In the period January to July, the Ashley area had 10.30 inches of precipitation, thus confirming the end of the drought. Wishek News, August 11, 1938, p. 1.

²⁰Interview, Fred Maier, Ashley, August 3, 1971; interview, Christian Gross, Ashley, September 4, 1971. When asked about the infestation and what the county had done about it, Walter Froh recalled that 10,000 poison labels for grasshopper bait had been printed by the Tribune presses. Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

²¹Wishek News, June 9, 1938, p. 1.

²²Ashley Tribune, June 23, 1938, p. 1.

of the infestation in a different manner:

In the past this season of the year was different. Farmers were busy harvesting and businessmen had a lot to do. The Wishek News would get all the market prices for all farm products every Wednesday afternoon and publish them. We did this because there was a demand for it; people wanted to know what price they would get if they sold grain, livestock, eggs, butterfat, etc. We haven't published any market prices for five or six years because there hasn't been much to sell and also because prices have been so low, farmers didn't care a great deal about it.²³

The fall of 1938 was mild and winter came gradually to the distraught area. The winter brought much less snow than normal, and when spring came in 1939, many farmers found their land in need of moisture. Even the usually optimistic Greiser was worried by the dry conditions.²⁴ The stubborn skies finally relented in April, and the long-sought rains came.²⁵ The rainy weather remained with the county through June; in one storm Wishek got three inches of rain.²⁶ The bountiful spring and summer rains encouraged the faith of the people in their country. The prospects of a decent crop encouraged farmers to take care of long needed repairs. Walter Froh reported,

²³Wishek News, August 4, 1938, p. 1.

²⁴Greiser wrote, "It seems to me, however, that we will not have a crop in 1939. In spite of the fact that my enthusiasm usually gets ahead of me." Wishek News, March 23, 1939, p. 1. A severe dust storm struck the Ashley area on April 24, causing limited visibility and frustration: "... housewives lamented the dust in their homes and those who had selected Monday as their wash day were downright discouraged and cross, many a husband becoming a victim of their pent-up anger at the weatherman." Ashley Tribune, April 27, 1939, p. 1.

²⁵Ashley Tribune, April 20, 1939, p. 1.

²⁶Wishek News, June 29, 1939, p. 1.

The busiest place in town is the Schulz Shoe Shop, who have had to employ six or seven additional men to take care of the repairing and sewing of reaper canvasses brought here from many miles around . . . Binders and headers for the past several years have been just excess baggage on the farm since there was no crop to cut and so have deteriorated from being idle. Farmers must put them in shape, hence so much activity just now. They need to be cleaned, oiled, and repaired, which keeps our implement dealers busy selling parts, and our blacksmiths busy welding the broken ones. Everyone's busy and we believe, happier, than they have been for a long time.²⁷

In July, however, the grasshoppers returned again to thwart the farmers. This time, however, man seemed destined to hold the upper hand. Bob Greiser reported the lush vegetation and early-maturing crops would likely escape the hoppers, which they did.²⁸ The farmers managed to save most of their 1939 crop for the first time in many years. The bouyant effect on the morale of the farmers was noted by the Wishek News:

Farmers in this community generally feel better this fall than they have for several years. The reason is that they are harvesting considerably grain; there is alot of it going into the granaries, more than was expected to come. They are busy threshing and the prospect of being able to feed their livestock honest to goodness grain instead of having to haul baled straw from town, makes them feel they are once more living in good old North Dakota.²⁹

²⁷Ashley Tribune, July 13, 1939, p. 1.

²⁸Wishek News, July 13, 1939, p. 1. Greiser felt there would be a good crop but that "prices are too low to make farming a profitable venture."

²⁹Ibid., September 7, 1939, p. 4. Greiser could not resist a dig at those who had left the county during the poor years:

"I wonder how soon those people who wandered to all parts of the United States in the past five years will began the trek back home. I'm glad I'm one of those who stuck it out; it always occured to me that North Dakota is O.K. and having kept my "seat" here during these poor years, I have an advantage over those of you who are coming back to get "located". Anyway, you are welcome and we hope you have learned a lesson you will never forget."

The crops were good enough to even require Sunday trains for the first time since 1933, a sure sign of returning prosperity.³⁰ Walter Froh remarked, "In general things look good around here, in fact like a paradise, compared to the past dry years."³¹

The fall and winter of 1939 were remarkably mild; a rainbow was seen in the skies in December, with the first snow coming on December 23.³² The spring of 1940 "roared like a lion" as snow storms continued into April, but the farmers were glad to have the moisture.³³ By June it was evident the weatherman was going to cooperate with the farmers. Walter Froh related his impressions on the effect of this favorable circumstance in a June editorial:

Fields, gardens, pasture and all manner of vegetation is growing by leaps and bounds. Mother Nature has clothed herself in a luxurious coat of green, unequalled for many years, and a sharp contrast to the dusty and bare landscape we have become accustomed to during the dry years before 1939.³⁴

³⁰Ibid., October 5, 1939, p. 1. Greiser recalled the "time when 16 trains came in and out of Wishek in a single day; the roundhouse employed up to 25 men and many trainmen lived here."

³¹Ashley Tribune, August 10, 1939, p. 1.

³²Wishek News, December 29, 1939, p. 1. Greiser considered the mild weather a blessing because "the cost of assistance to persons on relief rolls has been lowered. . . and school teachers who must accept unmarketable registered warrants. . . have been patient because they have not been required to tramp through deep snow to get to their work." Ibid., December 21, 1939, p. 1.

³³Ashley Tribune, April 4, 1940, p. 1; Wishek News, April 4, 1940, p. 5. In an editorial on April 18, Bob Greiser predicted, "This is the year when the Republicans will win the election, New York and Cincinnati will play in the world's baseball series and the farmers of North Dakota will harvest a good crop." Wishek News, April 18, 1940, p. 1.

³⁴Ashley Tribune, June 6, 1940, p. 1.

The favorable weather enabled the farmers to harvest their first real crop in eight years. Even the grasshoppers abandoned their annual onslaught against the county's vegetation and homes.³⁵ The excellent harvest is reflected in a Tribune editorial in August of 1940:

Farmers are threshing more wheat to the acre than expected, and many yields exceeding 20 bushels to the acre have been reported. A large number of reports in the neighborhood of 10 to 12 bushels per acre would indicate that the county average may exceed the estimated 10 bushels to the acre. Most of our farmers are preparing to store their wheat to take advantage of the government loan price of 70 cents per bushel.³⁶

In the period 1936-1940, the natural environment greatly shaped the agricultural fortunes of the McIntosh farmers. In 1936, 1937, and 1938, the combination of drought and grasshoppers ruined any chance the McIntosh farmers had for a crop. In 1939, the adequate rain and late arrival of the grasshopper invasion combined to allow the farmers to

³⁵At least one new pest was working in the country. Fred Ballinger reported to the Wishek News, "he had a fair crop this year, but it would have been better if gophers hadn't done so much damage. His farm is surrounded on all sides by prairie, inhabited by thousands of gophers." Wishek News, November 28, 1940, pp. 1, 5.

³⁶Ashley Tribune, August 22, 1940, p. 1. Echoing a similar theme was Bob Greiser in the Wishek News, August 8, 1940, p. 1:

"Wheat will be of the best grade, most of it weighing 60 lbs. and better to the bushel. Only about five per cent of the farmers in the county have made seed loans. This means that most of the grain is not mortgaged and may be sold without interference. . . . They will also be able to make needed improvements, which has not been possible in the past ten years. Of course, most of them carry a heavy debt, but with this community coming back to normal again and with a possible adjustment to be made on their debts they can again look into the future with hope, such hope as only the class of people living in Logan and McIntosh counties have had during these depression years."

reap a partial reward for their efforts. Though the 1939 harvest was not unusually large compared with crops of the 1920's, it was bountiful when compared with harvests of the 1930's. In 1940 conditions were most favorable--excellent rainfall, bountiful sunshine, absence of hoppers--and the '40 harvest marked a true return to normal production. Thus, from 1936 through 1940 nature determined the degree of economic prosperity in McIntosh county. When times were bad--1936-1938--the entire county suffered, and when times were good--1939-1940--everyone prospered. But the role of the environment was only one part of the triumvirate of forces acting on the agricultural life of McIntosh county. As the environment worked to limit agricultural income, more and more farmers encountered the second member of the triumvirate, foreclosure. This demon would prove as merciless as the environment had been.

CHAPTER III

FORECLOSURE, TENANCY, AND TAXES

In addition to environmental adversities, there were other adversities lurking in the McIntosh countryside in the 1930's. Chief among these were tenancy and foreclosure. As weather and pestilence worked to destroy a man's crop, foreclosure took his land from him. To escape legal loss of their holdings, many farmers sold their land and became tenant farmers on someone else's property. The problem of tenancy did not begin with the great drought of the Thirties, however, but, rather, had its inception in the Twenties. A marked increase in the number of rented farms in North Dakota began as the prosperity of World War I faded into declining prices and deteriorating land values. By 1930 there was four times as much farm tenancy and three and a half times as much acreage tenancy as in 1900. Of the 77,975 farms in the state in 1930, 27,400--35.1 per cent--were operated by tenants; and in 1940, 45.1 per cent of the farmers of North Dakota were tenants.¹ In McIntosh county in 1930 there were 284 rented farms out of a total of 1,101--25.8 per cent; by 1935 there were 334 rented farms out of a total 1,160, or

¹John M. Gillette, "Farm Tenancy," Gillette Papers, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, University of North Dakota, Box 5, Folder 7, pp. 1-2. (Hereafter cited as Gillette Papers). U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture: 1935, II, 314. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture: 1945, Vol I, pt. 11, p. 89. (Hereafter cited as Census of Agriculture: 1945).

28.8 per cent.² In 1940 there were 1,118 farms in McIntosh county and 42.3 per cent were operated by tenants.³ Commenting on the tenancy problems, Bob Greiser observed:

When you see such wonderful country and find that the people that once owned them [farms] could not make a go of it, you wonder what's wrong with our economic conditions, and if you give that a little thought, you will decide that the man who works the soil is not getting a fair shake.⁴

Perhaps the clearest picture of the problem is shown in the figures representing the value, per acre, of farmland. In 1930 the average value of farmland and buildings per acre for North Dakota was \$25; in 1935 it was \$18; in 1940 it was \$13. The corresponding figures for McIntosh county were \$27, \$18 and \$10.⁵

These impoverished times had a marked effect upon the living conditions of the people. In 1938 the McIntosh Land Use Planning Commission published some eye-opening statistics: less than 10 per cent of the county farms had a water supply and sewage disposal system, only 2 per cent of the farm homes had electricity, and the most common fuel was a dried brick mixture of straw and manure.⁶

²John M. Gillette, "North Dakota Farm Tenancy Data, by Counties, 1930, 1935," Gillette Papers, Box 5, Folder 7.

³Census of Agriculture: 1945, p. 91.

⁴Wishek News, November 16, 1939, p. 1.

⁵Thomas J. Pressly and William H. Scofield, eds, Farm Real Estate Values in the United States by Counties, 1850-1959 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965), pp. 37-38.

⁶Land Use Planning, p. 19.

A special report submitted to Governor Moses in 1939 surveyed the depression years and found the causes of the North Dakota depression to be:

A. Severe drought throughout a large part of the state year after year--seven years in some sections. B. Extensive periodic grasshopper and rust infestations, with a consequent destruction of all growing crops in wide areas of the state. C. Loss of foreign wheat markets with a consequent excess domestic production of wheat--the State's principle cash crop. D. Prices for agricultural products below cost of production.⁷

The results of these conditions, the report went on to say, were,

in point of number, 49 percent of the farmers of North Dakota have lost their land and are tenant operators. North Dakota farmers now own only 29 percent of the total value of farms in this state. Farm indebtedness has reached such proportion, that in many thousands of cases it seems impossible of liquidation without drastic adjustment.⁸

The drastic adjustment most often taken was foreclosure. The peak years for foreclosure appear to have been 1937-38. One indication of the crisis was the large number of written requests for help in the 1937-38 period. The governmental official most sought for help seems to have been Governor Langer, indicated by the letters written to him. In 1937, as in 1938, he received twenty-one letters from McIntosh county, concerning foreclosure matters; in 1939 he received only one

⁷North Dakota, North Dakota Public Welfare Board, "Special Report to Honorable John Moses, Governor, on Relief and Economic Situation in North Dakota," by L. A. Baker, Division of Accounting, Financial Reports, April 22, 1939 (mimeographed), p. 1. (Hereafter cited as "Special Report").

⁸Ibid.

such letter, and in 1940, two.⁹

To help meet the growing problem of foreclosure, Langer issued a moratorium on foreclosure by state agencies in 1937. This action was welcomed by the farmers, but many were confused over its application. One man wondered if the act could prevent a collection agency from moving him off his step-father's farm (Langer said it could)¹⁰, while an elderly lady was wondering which act protected her property from creditors, the Langer moratorium or the Frazier-Lemke Act.¹¹ Showing obvious concern for the farmer, Langer made it a point to answer

⁹Some of the more interesting letters were from the following people: C. M. Ritter and J. W. Hofer to William Langer, January 19, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 70, Folder 19; Gideon Dobler to William Langer, February 26, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 3; Mrs. Kathrina Feiszt to William Langer, February 6, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 1; Fred Warner to William Langer, February 22, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 2; S. P. Lacher to William Langer, February 23, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 3; Simon M. Schwind to William Langer, April 8, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 74, Folder 15; William Huber to William Langer, April 17, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 74, Folder 16; Mrs. Louis Groehler to William Langer, June, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 75, Folder 3; E. B. Walker to William Langer, September 28, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 17; Calvin Kautz to William Langer, February 7, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 76; Folder 12; Dr. George Grant to William Langer, March 16, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 72, Folder 10; Walt Schmid to William Langer, February 19, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 73, Folder 18; Jacob Docktor to William Langer, February 28, 1939, Langer Papers, Box 100, Folder 8; and Mrs. Ben Schlenker to William Langer, August 14, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 102, Folder 4. These were letters from McIntosh writers only.

¹⁰William Baner to William Langer, April 20, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 8.

¹¹Dr. E. H. Maercklein writing for Mrs. Young to William Langer, April 23, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 8. Langer said if a state agency was involved, then his moratorium would help her; if a federal agency was involved, then the Frazier-Lemke Act would apply.

inquiries as fast as possible. Often a delay of a couple weeks could cost a man his land or possessions, so Langer consistently replied immediately to the desperate pleas sent his way. This pattern is best shown in Langer's correspondence with a Zeeland farmer who was about to lose his tractor and plow because he could not meet his payments; replying three days after the letter was written, Langer told the man the moratorium would protect him and "if any attempt is made to take these articles away from you, let me know at once."¹² On another occasion Langer told a family faced with foreclosure, "Keep me informed on this matter. I may be able to get the Federal Land Bank not to be so hard with you."¹³ Langer, of course, had no official connection with the Land Bank, but his willingness to "go to bat" for his people made a deep impression on them, and they continued to bring their problems to him.

Perhaps the most eloquent letter concerning foreclosure came from a Lehr farmer. Though his letter is crude in structure, the man's desperation is easily discerned:

. . . last fall I sold my personal property and paid all my personal taxes and from what little I did have left i bought me a small Shoe and Harniss repair shop and rented me a house and moved to Lehr to get closer to School with my Children and i did have about \$125.00 left over and I worked and pulled myself threw untill now but now all my money is gone and there is so little work that i canot make it aney longer i have to have hilp or otherwise I must let my

¹²William Langer to E. B. Walker, October 1, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 17. Walker had written to Langer on September 28, so he got fast action from Langer.

¹³William Langer to Mrs. W. J. Kinn, October 13, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 71, Folder 18.

Family suffer. . . at the present time I live on the farm again I did not farm this spring all I have is 3 cows and they give us our milk and Butter for the table use and very little to sell the Homestead where I am liveing on is morgaged to the Federal Land Bank and i could never pay anything to them for the last four years and so I am now where I am without aney means all I have is a good reputation amongs my neighbors.¹⁴

The farmers of McIntosh county did fight their own battles in the foreclosure crisis as much as they could. In March, 1940, the Farmers Union chapters of the county held a mass meeting and announced their support for various debt adjustment bills pending in Congress. The president of the Beaver Creek Local wrote to Representative Lemke about the bills; he warned Lemke, "If you forget us, we sure will forget you when you are running for office some day."¹⁵ One bill the chapters were particularly interested in was the Farmers Union Debt Adjustment Bill. Its provisions included the following points:

1. To adjust, refinance, and scale down farm mortgage debts, both federal and private.
2. To reduce to a maximum of 3 percent interest rates on Federal Land Bank and Land Bank commissioner loans.
3. To limit the institution of foreclosure proceedings and the taking of deficiency judgments.
4. To further democratize the administration of farm credit and increase the control afforded the family-sized farms by setting up county committees.
5. To place the Farm credits system in a self-supporting basis and abolish the compulsory purchase requirements on land bank stock.

¹⁴Henry Schrenk to William Langer, June 14, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 79, Folder 15. Grammar and punctuation mistakes in original letter.

¹⁵Paul Woehl to William Lemke, March 4, 1940, William Lemke Papers, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, University of North Dakota, Box 19, Folder 1. (Hereafter cited as Lemke Papers).

6. To allow farmers already foreclosed or about to be foreclosed by the Federal Land Bank or Land Bank Commissioner to stay on their farms.¹⁶

Closely related to the problem of unpaid loans was the problem of unpaid taxes. With the poor crops, need for the bare essentials of life, and limited or no income, the McIntosh people simply could not pay their taxes. From 1932 to 1938 the county government's debt increased from \$89,000 to \$159,899.¹⁷ For the period 1930-1938 the taxable value of all taxable property in the county decreased 58.2 per cent: the property valuation was \$12,434, 179 in 1930; in 1938 it was \$5,199,885.¹⁸ In 1937, 73.6 per cent of the tax payments in the county were delinquent--the highest figure in the entire state.¹⁹

The representatives from McIntosh county introduced a bill in the state legislature in 1937 to lighten the tax burden. The measure proposed:

that all lands held by the Bank of North Dakota be offered for sale. . . . The person who last owned the land, before it was foreclosed, will be given first opportunity to purchase the land or if that person has no desire to re-purchase the land, then any member of his family, shall have first chance. . . . the Bank of North Dakota now owns thousands of acres of land which are tax exempt, and if the above bill passes most of this land will again be placed on the tax lists and to a certain extent relieve the tax burden of other land owners.²⁰

¹⁶Mrs. Ben Schlenker to William Langer, August 14, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 102, Folder 4.

¹⁷"Special Report," p. 13.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 20. The per cent decrease for North Dakota during the same period was 53.5

¹⁹Ibid., p. 11. The state's average was 41 per cent delinquent.

²⁰Wishek News, February 4, 1937, p. 1. The bill was House Bill 99.

Even more drastic was the action called for by a meeting of McIntosh residents in September, 1937. The people passed a resolution calling for petitions asking the governor "to call a special session of the legislature for the purpose of providing legislation cancelling all back taxes on real estate."²¹ This step was strongly criticized by one irate letter writer who felt outside interests would buy all the land if they knew they did not have to pay taxes on it.²² This same man also attacked the idea of raising the sales tax to pay off county debts. He noted, "A great help to the average farmer if his real estate taxes are cancelled & he will pay it double or triple in an increased sales tax."²³

The problem of indebtedness could not be solved by one legislature or by one governor. The debts of the Thirties carried over to the early Forties. The constant reminder of unpaid taxes would take its toll of the will to continue of an already distraught people. Some would simply give up and move away rather than face further frustration.²⁴ Fortunately for many, the state and federal governments instigated various aid programs to help meet the demands of daily life. Relief, the third member of the agricultural trimvirate, worked to alleviate the conditons caused by the other members of that triumvirate.

²¹Ashley Tribune, September 23, 1937, p. 1.

²²Ed Bauer to the Wishek News, September 30, 1937, p. 4.

²³Ibid., September 23, 1937, p. 4. Many people said Bob Greiser was behind the scheme, but Bauer felt this was not the case.

²⁴Interviews, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971, and H. E. Timm, Wishek, September 18, 1971.

CHAPTER IV

RELIEF PROGRAMS

When the full force of the depression hit McIntosh families, many found they needed help in order to obtain the necessities of life. The state's financial reserves were unable to provide all the food, clothing, and funds desperately sought by the people, so a call for help went to Washington for federal assistance. The Roosevelt administration offered the state a variety of grant-relief, as well as work-relief programs. The importance of federal relief programs is summarized by Professor Elwyn Robinson, who has devoted his career to studying the history of North Dakota:

The depression emphasized North Dakota's dependence on outside resources in a new way. Significant as Langer's wheat embargo, debt moratorium, and budget cuts undoubtedly were, a flood of money sent in by the federal government from the rest of the nation did the chief work in relieving the suffering of the terrible 1930's.¹

There were three federal agricultural programs that had great effect in McIntosh county: the Frazier-Lemke Act, the feed and seed program, and the second Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA).

The Frazier-Lemke Act was passed initially in June of 1934. Its formulators were Lynn Frazier, U.S. Senator from North Dakota, and William Lemke, U.S. Representative from North Dakota. The idea originated with Lemke in 1929. The main goal of the plan was to help the debt-ridden farmer pay off his bills through a refinance agency set up

¹Robinson, North Dakota, p. 406.

by the federal government.² The law was passed as an amendment to the Bankruptcy Act of 1898, but it was almost immediately declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.³ It was re-written and repassed by Congress in 1935, and upheld by the High Court in 1937.⁴

In North Dakota several cases were filed under the 1935 act, but almost all of them were quickly dismissed by Judge Andrew Miller of the District Court in Fargo.⁵ The consternation of the farmers over this unexpected action was vividly expressed in a letter written to Senator Frazier by a Lehr farmer:

²Ibid., p. 402.

³The Court ruled, "The fifth amendment commands that, however great the Nation's need, private property shall not be thus taken even for a wholly public use without just compensation." The case was Louisville Joint Stock Land Bank v. William W. Radford. 74th Cong., 1st sess., May 27, 1935, Congressional Record, LXXIX, 9257.

⁴Frazier-Lemke Refinance Bill, U. S. Code Annotated, Title 11, Bankruptcy, secs. 201-500 (1946). The case upholding the validity of the second law was Robert Page Wright v. Vinton Branch of the Mountain Trust Bank of Roanoke, Va. U. S., Congress, Senate, Moratorium on Farm Mortgages, S. Doc. 47, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., 1937, p. 8.

⁵Miller's action was based on the precedent set in In re Anderson and In re Palmer. The first case involved the dismissal of a petition because "the debtor possessed no reasonable probability of rehabilitation as contemplated by the act. . ."; the second case was dismissed because "from the whole picture of his financial condition there is no reasonable probability or hope of his financial rehabilitation within the three year moratorium period or at any time, and therefore could only postpone the date of inevitable liquidation." Apparently, Miller felt most of the petitioning farmers were hopelessly in debt, and that the bill could not save them. Therefore, to be fair to the creditors, he voided the petitions. In re Anderson, Federal Supplement: Cases Argued and Determined in the District Courts of the United States Court of Claims, Vol. XXII, p. 936, (1938). In re Palmer, Federal Supplement: Cases Argued and Determined in the District Courts of the United States Court of Claims, Vol. XXI, p. 632, (1938). Lemke had warned the farmers when the last law went into effect that they should be careful.

No doubt you know what Judge Miller does with the farmers I am sorry to tell you that several hundred farmers took advantage of this act in McIntosh and Logan counties. . . . most of the cases are dismissed it seems that one Judge can overrule the Congress of the U.S. the president and the U.S. Supreme Court. Now senator the farmers sure feel bad about this after all the farmers payed for filing fees and also the appraisal fees. . . and now being dismissed and the creditors having a free hand to do with the farmer what they want. The Federal Land Bank is foreclosing on the farmers left and right. . . this is a very good law the best the farmers ever had yet but the question is to make it work in this state for the poor farmers.⁶

One very interested party in the Frazier-Lemke cases was Governor Langer. Apparently desiring to obtain political ammunition for his senatorial campaign, Langer sent a form letter in October, 1938, to people who had filed for bankruptcy under the act, asking advice on potential improvements in it.⁷ The response indicated most farmers were happy with the provisions of the law but disgusted with the legal operation of it. Some McIntosh writers felt they had wasted their money on

In U. S., Congress, House, Representative Lemke explaining the procedure under the Frazier-Lemke Moratorium, 75th Cong., 1st sess., April 1, 1937, Appendix to Congressional Record, LXXI, 718-19, he stated:

"A farmer ought to be careful and not submit any proposal for composition or extension of time that he knows or has reason to believe he cannot live up to. . . he must not be too optimistic of his ability to pay. . . If, however, the debtor at any time fails to comply with the provisions of this act or with any orders of the court made pursuant thereto, or commits waste, or is unable to refinance himself within 3 years the court may order the appointment of a trustee and order the property sold. In other words, this gives the farmer 3 years in which to refinance himself."

⁶Mayer Ourach to Lynn Frazier, August 4, 1938, Lemke Papers, Box 13, Folder 19. Frazier turned Ourach's letter over to Lemke, who wrote Ourach on August 16, 1938. Lemke said he was taking the Miller cases to the Court of Appeals for another hearing; he urged Ourach to organize the farmers to help with the legal paperwork, thus cutting legal expenses. (Grammar as in original letter).

⁷William Langer, form letter, undated 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 16-18. Langer noted,

fees for the law, and all expressed displeasure with Judge Miller's action.⁸ The return of better times in 1939 and 1940 removed the Frazier-Lemke Act as an important issue in the state, but even after good times had returned, many farmers would proudly remember the efforts of the two legislators who had tried to save the American Farmer in his darkest hour.⁹

Perhaps the most welcome federal plan was the feed and seed loan program. It had been instituted when the Roosevelt administration came into office, but it became most important from 1936 to 1938 in McIntosh county. On November 30, 1936, a meeting of 250 farmers in Ashley passed several recommendations to help relieve their livestock feed situation:

"With the poor crops we have had something must be done to protect those who are hard up and if it cannot be done nationally, we must do it in the state. Maybe we could do more nationally, and if I am elected to the senate, I should like the benefit of all the facts you can give me."

⁸John Warner to William Langer, October 12, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 16; Henry Ruff to William Langer, October 12, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 16; Jacob Kinzle to William Langer, October 15, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 16; Mrs. Pauline Fiechtner to William Langer, October 15, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 16; George Becker to William Langer, October 22, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 17; Getzel Ourach to William Langer, October 17, 1938; Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 17; Fred Harsh to William Langer, October 14, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 16; Sebastian Lacher to William Langer, October 17, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 18; John Denning to William Langer, October 24, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 18; Henrich Ehley to William Langer, October 21, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 17; Jacob Weisz to William Langer, October 16, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 87, Folder 17. Most of these letters were from the Lehr vicinity, indicating the area hardest hit by Miller's action.

⁹Interview, Christian Gross, Ashley, September 4, 1971; interview, Fred Maier, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

1. Resolved that drought aid be passed for drought-stricken farmers as soon as Congress and state legislature meet. Special session to be called if necessary.
2. Resettlement grants be increased for farmers.
3. W.P.A. work to be continued for urban workers and provisions made for farmers to continue W.P.A. work. Recommend that W.P.A. be made permanent.
4. Recommend that action be taken on the above as soon as possible so feed and seed may be secured in time to prevent delay. Grants or human relief need speedy action to prevent suffering.¹⁰

The state legislature found it could not handle the livestock feed problem by itself, so sent a resolution to Congress, appraising it of the situation:

That we call to the attention of our Representatives in Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Resettlement Administration, and the Federal Relief Administration the serious emergency now existing in our State, and urge upon the President and the Congress to make immediately available funds to meet this emergency condition either by appropriation by Congress or by issuance by such Executive order as may be necessary to obtain for our farmers the feed necessary to save their livestock and carry them through the winter months.¹¹

The appeal apparently attracted immediate attention, as Governor Langer announced on February 4, 1937, that the Resettlement Administration was making \$140,000 in loans available for supplying livestock feed to farmers.¹² The Resettlement's office in McIntosh county was in the Ashley courthouse. The response to the additional funds was overwhelming. The Tribune reported:

¹⁰Wishek News, December 3, 1936, p. 1.

¹¹U.S., Congress, Senate, Concurrent Resolution of Legislature of North Dakota to Senator Nye, 75th Cong., 1st sess., January 22, 1937, Congressional Record, LXXXI, p. 334.

¹²Wishek News, February 4, 1937, p. 3.

Seed loans here and seed loans there! Seed loans, seed loans, everywhere! Seed loans are the big topic at the courthouse now. Since it has been made known that seed loan applications are being made out, the courthouse has been crowded every day early morning til late afternoon with farmers inquiring how the set up works, where they should start, where to go next, whether or not its a wise move to make out a loan, discussing the seed loan set up, weather and road conditions, with one another; running from one office to another, hands full of papers, trying to get all the information they need before they can actually settle down to make out the loan; scurrying in and out round about in an attempt to be the first one up in the court room, where the applications are filled out, so they can get done and go home before evening; a lobby full of women and children waiting for their husbands and daddies to complete the loans, or waiting to be called to sign the papers.¹³

In March of 1937 the federal government expanded its feed and seed loan program. It offered loans, with a limit of \$400, to those who could not get credit from any other source.¹⁴ The federal seed prices, per bushel, were spring wheat \$1.60, durum wheat \$1.70, barley (malting) \$1.40, barley (feed or Trepri type) \$1.00, oats \$.65, and flax \$2.70.¹⁵ The loans proved easy to obtain, and rumors that such loans might ultimately be cancelled, made them even more desirable.

The poor crop of 1937 forced farmers to mortgage their 1938 crop for the seed for that crop. Early in 1938 Governor Langer sent telegrams to all county agents, asking them to advise him on conditions in their counties. Robert Adam, McIntosh agent, wired Langer that "approximately seven hundred farmers will need seed. Eighty percent are the same persons as last year. . . seed need more general in county than

¹³Ashley Tribune, March 11, 1937, p. 4.

¹⁴Wishek News, March 4, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁵Ibid.

last year."¹⁶

Just because the loans were available does not mean the people were happy with them. One man became annoyed with the never-ending procession of loans he was forced to take out, and he wrote Governor Langer about a better system. He proposed to give 200 bushels of wheat to large farmers and 100 bushels to small farmers and cease subsidies altogether. He reasoned "if we do pay for the wheat for seed \$1.60 for bushel this spring and next fall sell it for 25¢ or 30¢ that don't help us."¹⁷

The last noteworthy episode in the feed and seed loan story came on July 27, 1938. A committee representing farmers from Zeeland, Danzig, and Ashley areas went to Bismarck on that day to explain the serious feed situation in McIntosh county to government officials. They did manage to get the Farm Security Administration to agree to relax the loan limit for farmers of their area, but no state action resulted.¹⁸ There was sufficient feed and seed in 1939 and 1940 for a majority of McIntosh farmers, thus removing this issue as a urgent problem for the county. But the memory of their dependence on federal loans for seed and feed would remain with the McIntosh farmers. To some it would be an unpleasant memory, one that would cause them to withdraw their support for the administration that enacted the programs.

¹⁶Robert Adam to William Langer, February 21, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 94, Folder 1.

¹⁷Fred Aipperspach to William Langer, February 28, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 73, Folder 21.

¹⁸Ashley Tribune, July 28, 1938, p. 1.

The other major federal agricultural program that was important in McIntosh county was the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. The second AAA emphasized soil-building practices and curtailed production throughout the period 1936-1940. In 1937, the AAA program stressed:

simplification of the program, establishment of a definite allowance so that each farmer who wished to take part in the program could know early in the year what his payment would be if he met certain requirements, and greater emphasis on soil-building practices.¹⁹

The AAA program in 1938 focused on cutting soil-depletion by curtailing production of wheat, flax, millet, corn and other grains, and planting more soil-conserving crops such as alfalfa and sweet clover.²⁰ In 1939 and 1940 the AAA continued these policies, with greater emphasis on curtailed wheat production because of the already high surplus on hand.²¹ In 1936 the AAA paid \$90,505.46 in conservation checks to McIntosh farmers; in 1937 they were paid \$65,047.79 by AAA; in 1938, \$99,019.39; and in 1939, \$66,972.52 was paid to McIntosh farmers by the AAA.²²

What was the reaction to these policies and edicts of the AAA? The Ashley Tribune generally supported the AAA plans in this period. In November, 1938, the paper ran a lengthy article on the necessity of practicing soil-conservation:

¹⁹Wishek News, December 31, 1936, p. 1.

²⁰Ibid., January 20, 1938, p. 8.

²¹Ibid., April 6, 1939, p. 1. Ibid., August 1, 1940, p. 8. In 1939 the government paid an extra ten to twelve cents per bushel to farmers who stayed within their wheat acreage allotment. Ibid., January 5, 1939, p. 1.

²²Ashley Tribune, February 11, 1937, p. 4. Wishek News, February 10, 1938, p. 1, Wishek News, June 15, 1939, p. 1, Wishek News, February 22, 1940, p. 1. The figures for 1940 were not published by either paper.

The truth is that agriculture in the Northern Great Plains has reached the point during the present generation when more and more farms are needing careful planning. . . And planning must include methods of soil conservation, building of fertility, prevention of erosion and conservation and control of water. It must also include improvement of marketing systems. It must include diversification; and diversification must bring livestock and food crops definitely into the picture.²³

Although the Wishek News was sometimes critical of government inaction and unreasonably complicated arrangements, it too favored most of what had been done. Writing in December, 1938, Bob Greiser wrote:

In the United States the people are being taken care of in better fashion than anywhere else. Again, there may be difference of opinion on the manner in which it is being done and the amount of money it is costing, but I am happy to know it is being done.²⁴

Although there is not an abundance of written opinion of farmers on the farm programs, available material gives a clear account of the reaction to the various programs. One man wrote to Representative Lemke, expressing his disapproval of the 1939 program "for the reason that we did not get a square deal in 1939 on our crop insurance. We lost about 151.00 on account of our Supervisor neglect of duty."²⁵ One man wrote the Tribune, praising the farm program, saying,

That's the best we have and let us do the best about it, and make it a little better as we go along. Before the farm program each farmer had to face his own problems. . . . In the present program all the farmer's problems are consolidated. . . . It's a program

²³Ashley Tribune, November 24, 1938, p. 1.

²⁴Wishek News, December 22, 1938, p. 1.

²⁵Benjamin Ault to William Lemke, April 29, 1940, Lemke Papers, Box 19, Folder 16.

for the farmer, of the farmer and should be kept up by the farmers. . . . It seems that some businessmen do not cooperate with the program. If it wasn't for the farm program, there would be quite a few businessmen out of business by now. . . .²⁶

Later this man expressed some reservations about the wheat restrictions:

"I think that penalty on wheat is too extreme and parity should not be used as penalty. . . . Why are we selling our products at 75 percent parity?"²⁷ One man tried to explain the reasoning behind the wheat program for others who might be confused by it:

The supply and demand regulate the price of wheat and that is the reason why we have a wheat program to adjust our supply to the demand, not the demand of the world but the demand of our own needs in this country. . . .²⁸

Another man praised the conservation policies and concluded:

I think that is the best farm program we farmers can get. . . . I think without a farm program we couldn't stay in this county, with no crops, all these years and we farmers can't count on a higher wheat price as long as our surplus is as large as now.²⁹

The support for the federal program was shown by the number who signed up for it; in March, 1940, the McIntosh Agricultural Conservation

²⁶G. G. Breitling to the Ashley Tribune, February 9, 1939, p. 4. Ibid., March 9, 1939, p. 8, Breitling wrote another letter to the Tribune in which he said:

"Another reason for a program is, that people or rather the farmers want a program since the last five years. I rubbed elbows with many farmers and I haven't talked to one yet who did not want a program in one form or the other."

²⁷Ibid., November 28, 1940, p. 4.

²⁸Ibid., March 9, 1939, p. 8. Bauer added, "I can not remember a time when farmers were satisfied with the wheat price, when it was low, it was too low, when it was high, it was not high enough."

²⁹Ibid., March 22, 1939, p. 4.

Committee reported more than 900 farmers, over 80 per cent of the county total, had registered for the 1940 AAA program.³⁰ In May of 1940 the same group reported 99 per cent of the McIntosh farmers had signed up for the program; the committee felt "the fact that a big majority of the farmers in McIntosh county have signed up under AAA shows the degree to which agriculture in this county has done toward a solution of its problems."³¹

Clearly the McIntosh people came to accept the assistance of the government in their agricultural pursuits. Although there was not complete agreement on all points of the federal programs, the farmers came to realize they needed outside help to survive, and they were willing to take some bad with the good. When asked how he felt about the New Deal's agricultural schemes, one farmer said, "There was a need for federal programs, although we felt it was better to just get the money outright."³² Walter Froh remembered "the farmers were generally happy with FDR's farm policies."³³ The people wanted and needed federal help to stay on the farm, and they were not voting to end that help when they voted against Franklin Roosevelt in 1940.

³⁰Wishek News, March 28, 1940, p. 1. The chief attraction of the AAA undoubtedly was its system of price supports.

³¹Ashley Tribune, May 23, 1940, p. 1. The committee reported that ninety-seven per cent of North Dakota farmers had signed up for the program. On May 31, 1941, a vote on the government's wheat quotas under the 1941 program was held. Nationally, eighty per cent of the farmers voted for the quotas; in North Dakota, ninety-four per cent supported the quotas; and in McIntosh county, seventy-eight per cent voted in favor of the government-established levels. Ibid., June 5, 1941, p. 1.

³²Interview, Christian Gross, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

³³Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

The discussion of government farm programs would not be complete without mention of the role of state government. Throughout the period 1936-1940, the government of North Dakota found itself hard-pressed to meet operating expenses and was not in any position to undertake major programs to help desperate farmers. The state did comply with federal instructions when given a role in dispensing seed and poison baits to farmers, and it did cooperate with the various federal agencies when asked to supply information. Beyond this, the state was unable to do much.

Perhaps the most important step taken by the state for the farmers was Governor Langer's order to the State Mill and Elevator, on July 23, 1937, to buy wheat at a price above market level. On that day the grain traders had reduced the price on lightweight 37 pound wheat from 89¢ to 37¢ per bushel. Langer ordered the State Mill to offer 72¢ per bushel, or 35¢ over the market price, for the light-weight wheat.³⁴ In succeeding weeks, Langer went on radio urging the people to sell wheat to the State Mill. Evidently his action was very popular in McIntosh county, as indicated by the letter to Langer from an Ashley banker:

. . . am heartily in favor of your action of having the State Mill & Elevator offer to buy our light weight wheat at a price that is fair. I believe if the farmers of the state would patronize the State Mill & Elevator every year they would receive more for their

³⁴Robinson, North Dakota, p. 412. The governor's move forced the grain traders to meet the new price, thus enhancing Langer's position among the farmers. Langer had taken other drastic measures during his first term as governor. On March 4, 1933, he proclaimed a state bank holiday, and a moratorium on all debts. He opened the banks on March 14, but extended the moratorium to prevent foreclosures by federal agencies. Ibid., pp. 405-06. One man recalled Langer's efforts to protect the farmers as "treating the collector like a chicken thief." Interview, John Ackerman, Wishek, September 18, 1971.

products and would be helping themselves instead of some grain firm outside the state.³⁵

A farmer wrote Langer:

I be happy to write you what I found I made a tripe to seen 44 farmers and show them a copy of your radio talk and [every] one was pleased with it and I myself believe it is good for the welfare of the state.³⁶

Langer's consistent effort to help the farmer would be remembered in the 1940 election.

With all the activity of the federal and state governments in the county during the depression, it is interesting to note that the various farm organizations that were strong nationally had little impact in the county. The most active group of the 1930's, the Farm Holiday Association, never attracted more than token attention in the county.³⁷ The Farmers Union organization did not come to the county until 1939, and it never garnered much enthusiasm either.³⁸ Perhaps the farmers had enough experience with outsiders in their contacts with the government

³⁵W. L. Johnston to William Langer, August 10, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 96, Folder 5.

³⁶F. S. Schumacher to William Langer, August 12, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 96, Folder 7. Spelling and grammar as in original letter.

³⁷Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971

³⁸Ibid. Wishek said one reason why the Farmers Union never attracted much support in McIntosh county was because mostly Democrats joined, and there were few Democrats in the county. This conclusion is supported by Professor Robinson, who noted that McIntosh county was one of eight counties without a Farmers Union Chapter in 1930, Robinson, North Dakota, p. 388.

agencies that they felt they did not want to bother with any more "help". Perhaps the McIntosh people were not joiners. Whatever the reason, the McIntosh farmer of the late Thirties clung to his individualism as much as possible, and he did not seek group action to solve his problems unless there was no other alternative.

Government aid to farmers went beyond feed loans and conservation programs. These efforts worked to improve the chances for a good crop for the farmers, but government planners were quick to realize all their programs for saving the farmer's land would come to naught unless they could do something for the farmer himself. Out of this realization grew several programs to provide work relief for needy people, both farmers and non-farmers. The most successful of these programs was run by the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.), a federal agency. At times during the late 1930's, the W.P.A. was the leading employer of McIntosh county residents.³⁹ Though the federal government was providing the aid, many distressed people directed their pleas for W.P.A. help to the state's governor, who for most of the period under study, was William Langer. Langer had been stripped of control of administration of the federal programs during his first term as governor because he allegedly had solicited funds from federal employees; during his second term, the Roosevelt administration made sure their programs were not administered by Langer.⁴⁰ During the late Thirties the state director for the relief and welfare programs was E. A. Wilson. In late 1936 rumors in McIntosh

³⁹See Appendix D for the statistical story of relief in McIntosh county.

⁴⁰Robinson, North Dakota, pp. 408-10.

county had Roosevelt's people withdrawing W.P.A. funds because Langer was back in the governor's mansion. Bob Greiser discounted those rumors and told the people, "I believe that Mr. Langer is in a very good position to cooperate with the president because he did not take part in the national election and therefore could not be classed as an opponent of the president."⁴¹

The W.P.A. rolls were trimmed in late 1936 with disastrous results. The McIntosh area was one of the hardest hit regions of the state. One young lady wrote Langer,

I am 20 years old and need the money awful bad I hardly have got any cloth to wear. . . . I wouldn't care if I would only get about \$25 then I would be satisfied but all the girls my age get it and I need it just as bad as any one of them. My dad is laid off the relief and we don't know when we will get on again.⁴²

A farmer wrote Langer, "The W.P.A. work is stoppt now and there is no other income and I have to do something for my children. . ."⁴³ The federal government set up the Resettlement Administration (R.A.) to handle the cases of those who had been laid off the W.P.A.; to receive R.A. aid two conditions had to be met: "[First] the farmer must be in actual need and have exhausted all other credit resources. Secondly, the applicant must either live on a farm or actually have derived the major portion of his income from farming."⁴⁴ These conditions proved

⁴¹Wishek News, November 26, 1936, p. 1.

⁴²Eldina Rath to William Langer, December 20, 1936, Langer Papers, Box 64, Folder 12. Spelling and grammar as in original letter.

⁴³Jacob Kessler to William Langer, December 1, 1936, Langer Papers, Box 64, Folder 7. Spelling as in original letter.

⁴⁴Wishek News, December 17, 1936, p. 1.

stringent, however, and the R.A. decided "all drought cases dropped by W.P.A. may apply to the R.A. for public aid and must be accepted or given one months' subsistence grant without investigation except through office interview."⁴⁵ The need for such a generous policy is clearly evident in the relief statistics for December, 1936: over \$33,300 was distributed to 1,214 cases, representing 67 per cent of the county's population.⁴⁶

In January, 1937, the county welfare board came under attack from a Wishek doctor. The chairman of the board wrote to Langer to explain the situation:

Just today we had our meeting and again we were abused not only by our clients but most shamefully by one of our medical doctors who accused us for not allowing some of his bills to be paid which we could not authorize. He seems to think we can get all kinds of money, but that we JUST DON'T CARE TO HELP the people. And he even went as far as telling us we were "rotten to the core" and should be sent to Jamestown to the Insane Asylum.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid., December 24, 1936, p. 1. The Regional Director for the R.A., Cal Ward, said, "Cold weather and great human suffering caused this decision." Bob Greiser was quite upset with the abrupt W.P.A. cut-back and resulting reshuffle of cases to the R.A. In the Wishek News, December 31, 1936, p. 1, Greiser stated,

"Thousands of families found themselves without employment when the Works Progress Administration recently announced a reduction of 50 per cent or more in employment. . . . The farmer and those living in open rural areas and the farm laborer who had derived a major portion of his income were turned over to the Resettlement without question. . . ."

⁴⁶Ibid., March 18, 1938, p. 1. For the statistical story of relief in McIntosh county, see Appendix D.

⁴⁷Mrs. F. Linnenburger to William Langer, January 31, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 4. Emphasis in original letter.

The secretary of the McIntosh Labor Clubs gave Langer another side of the affair. He told the governor that the president and the secretary of the board were related and that all medical patients had to see the president's husband (who was a chiropractor) before the board would pay any medical expenses. He warned Langer, "something must be done in the very near future about this setup in the welfare board in our county or we will have to go and forceable remove some of the persons in this setup. We cannot let this go much longer."⁴⁸

The governor was interested in providing as many hours of work as possible for low level state employees. His greatest effort toward achieving this goal came in the summer of 1937. He wrote a form letter to all ditchmen and weedmen employed by the highway department, telling them,

It is my conclusion that ditchmen and weedmen should work five or six days a week. The money shortage should be so adjusted that those higher up in salary received less, while the weedmen and ditchmen receive more, or at least get more work. A man cannot feed a team oats and only work three days a week. . . . will appreciate it if you will write me personally just what shape your Highways are in in your locality, and offer any suggestions to improve road conditions.⁴⁹

The response to this chance for more work was immediate and very favorable from McIntosh county. The men were more than willing to accept more work and most accepted Langer's decision to seek more funds for

⁴⁸Herbert Breitling to William Langer, February 8, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 79, Folder 1. Spelling as in original letter.

⁴⁹William Langer, form letter, June 25, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 13.

them, and reduce wages for those higher up in salaries.⁵⁰

In 1937 the relief picture was as bleak as the harvest yield. Emil Wiedman, county welfare director, wrote Langer about the relief problem facing the welfare board of McIntosh county. He told the governor that the main problem was a cutback in W.P.A. employment which prevented many farmers from earning extra money. He noted, "Most of our farmers last fall put up the biggest part of their fuel, clothing, and flour with their WPA money and then the grants that they received made it possible for them to manage thru the winter."⁵¹

One problem during the winter of 1937-38 was keeping the relief workers busy. The Tribune noted there were 514 unemployed persons around Ashley and "Ashley is sorely in need of projects to find work for these people so that they may make an honest living."⁵² The Wishek News reported

⁵⁰Simon Rub to William Langer, June 29, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 13; Fred Aipperspach to William Langer, June 29, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 13; Mike Dumbroski to William Langer, June 30, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 14; Henry Heupel to William Langer, June 30, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 14; John Jangula to William Langer, July 1, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 14; Emil Miller to William Langer, July 3, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 15; Gustave Skally to William Langer, July 5, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 86, Folder 15. It is doubtful that the roads were really as bad as the men described to Langer, but he had offered the men the chance to work longer if they reported their roads to be in poor condition, so they did.

⁵¹Emil Wiedman to William Langer, September 16, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 79, Folder 4.

⁵²Ashley Tribune, December 9, 1937, p. 1.

The city council has been wrestling with many important problems the past winter. Funds are low and means had to be provided to keep the NYA boys and girls occupied. Then there is the matter of providing work for the WPA men--about 100 of them--and the whole thing has kept the councilmen busy.⁵³

To help find jobs, the local workers formed labor clubs which acted to find jobs and get the men back on relief work, should they be taken off the work rolls. On one occasion the president of the Wishek Labor Club wrote Governor Langer about seven men who had been taken off the W.P.A. list; he urged Langer "to do something for these distressed families so that they may have the necessities of life and relief [sic] their terrible starving situation."⁵⁴ The secretary of the Ashley Labor Club wrote Congressman Lemke, appraising him of the W.P.A. situation in the county. His letter is an excellent summary of the economic woes of those who depended on government work programs for their income.

⁵³Wishek News, March 10, 1938, p. 1. Later Greiser became concerned about the mental attitude of those who had learned to rely on relief for their income. In the Wishek News, January 25, 1940, p. 1, he noted the C.C.C. report of fifty years worth of work yet to do, and remarked

"Our people have hoped that private industry would so revive that all idle youth would find jobs. . . . It is intolerable to see a great army of boys and young men standing around with nothing to do. One fears the things going on in their minds, their unhappiness in a land that offers no opportunity for them. It fears what fires of discontent, and possibly crime on the part of some, may be kindled by those sparks of unrest."

⁵⁴H. K. Walth to William Langer, June 4, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 5. Langer wrote to the seven men on June 7, and he told them,

"You may depend on it that I will do everything I possibly can to help you and am today bringing this matter to the attention of Mr. E. A. Wilson, Executive Director of the State Welfare Board here, and asking them to make a complete investigation of your case."

Wish to call your attention to a very serious situation in our state. That situation is the plight of the WPA workers. . . I am getting \$40.00 a month for common labor, out of which must come rent, averaging \$10.00 a month, fuel which costs about \$5.00, shoes and clothing cost us a hundred dollars a year. . . school supplies and various miscellaneous items average \$3.00 a month. What is left of our checks must be divided between groceries, flour, medical and dental care, emergencies, milk and dairy products. . . . To exist at all, we must have at least \$50.00 a month--100 hours at the prevailing wage of 50 cents a hour. For a decent standard of living the hours should be increased to 130. . . . One thing I have in common with all other people in the United States is to see prosperity return. I sincerely believe that outside of a bumper crop with adequate prices, the most effective way of returning prosperity to our state is to give the underpaid, and in most cases, undernourished WPA worker more money. This money will all be put in circulation. . . If we had more it would be spent, and in that way the merchant would be able to buy more, we would be able to consume a larger portion of meats and dairy products. The goals of the county would be that much nearer realization.⁵⁵

Though the state could not match the relief efforts of the Federal government, it did institute one major program. Governor Langer drew up an old age assistance plan to raise the benefits paid to the elderly. This measure passed in the general election of 1938, but the 1939 legislature refused to grant the funds for the program.⁵⁶ Langer then initiated three measures that would provide revenue for the scheme:

⁵⁵N. A. Miller to William Lemke, May, 1938, Lemke Papers, Box 13, Folder 14. The letter was attached to a petition with seventy-nine names on it, apparently all W.P.A. workers.

⁵⁶The pension plan passed with a vote of 154,367 to 78,427. North Dakota, Secretary of State, Compilation of Election Returns, National and State: 1930-1944. (Hereafter cited as Election Returns 1930). Bob Greiser, who was serving as senator in the legislature at this time, wrote in the Wishek News, March 2, 1939, p. 1,

". . . it might be said that the people showed a little inconsistency in that they voted overwhelmingly for the \$40.00 old age plan, yet decided that their chief executive should be a man who is opposed to it. You can't have something when you are opposed to giving it to yourself."

establishment of municipal liquor stores whose profits would be turned over to the pension plan, a gross-transaction tax, and a prohibition on highway construction, with diversion of highway money to the pension fund. A special election was held on these measures on July 11, 1939, and all three were decisively defeated. The opposition, headed by the new governor, John Moses, included business leaders, the North Dakota Taxpayers Association and some Nonpartisan Leaguers.⁵⁷ During his battle for the plan, Langer had requested his supporters to get petitions circulating in favor of it. One McIntosh citizen told Langer the petitions were rapidly filled and "let me assure you that we are fighting the fight for justice to human rights, shoulder to shoulder with you."⁵⁸

One critical problem facing the relief program in 1939 was finances. The lack of tax money directly affected the amount of funds available for aiding the needy. There were several meetings held during that year to discuss the shortage of funds. Taking a leading

⁵⁷Robinson, North Dakota, pp. 413, 14. Writing on the eve of the election, Bob Greiser seemed to sense the election would be a defeat for Langer, yet he still retained his faith in Langer's political mastery. Writing in the Wishek News, July 6, 1939, p. 4, Greiser told his readers,

"With me the Nonpartisan League is bigger than Bill Langer or anyone else, and for that reason I have not given the special election much thought, although I was opposed to the idea. Just the same, it might turn out to be his stepping stone back to the top. Never forget that he's smart, even though he pulls a boner occassionally. Maybe the special election is one. If it is, then he's about washed up politically. Better wait, though, before you write the obituary."

⁵⁸D. D. Aipperspach to William Langer, February 21, 1939, Langer Papers, Box 100, Folder 7.

role at the meetings held in McIntosh county were the business and professional people. These two groups saw a solution to the problem in a more efficient system of tax collection.⁵⁹ At a meeting in September, these two groups gave their observations on the poor employment prospects, the growing relief roll, and the lack of finances for the relief program. They concluded

. . . improved crop and market conditions coupled with improved farming practices would effect a drastic reduction in relief needs in the county. However, this would not solve the entire problem since it was felt the county in the past 50 years has completed a cycle from virgin prairie through a boom period and into a severe depression which has returned values on property to nearly those of a much earlier date. . . . McIntosh county must continue to receive state and federal assistance to meet this problem. However, a program of tapering off the amount of relief granted must be inaugurated immediately.⁶⁰

One result of this recommendation was the directive from the county welfare board ordering certain recipients of relief to stop driving their cars, to turn in their license plates, and to place their cars on blocks.⁶¹ Another order required all relief clients to plant and take care of a garden during the summer.⁶²

⁵⁹Ashley Tribune, August 31, 1939, p. 1; Wishek News, August 31, 1939, p. 1.

⁶⁰Wishek News, September 28, 1939, pp. 1, 5.

⁶¹Ashley Tribune, November 16, 1939, p. 4. This move was apparently an attempt to force those who really were not dependent on relief off the county rolls. The board felt if they owned a car and could afford to drive it, then they must not really need relief aid. Those on Farm Security were exempted from the order because they had to drive machinery in their work.

⁶²Ibid., April 25, 1940, p. 1. Those on direct relief were to receive free packages of seed; others were to pay \$2.30 for their seed. Each package of seed weighed ten pounds!

In February, 1940, a report was made by the Relief and Debt Survey Commission, a special body created by the state legislature. The Commission's major recommendation concerned property taxes, which caused widespread tax delinquency with increasing forfeiture and foreclosure. . . . The Commission believes there is need of a more equitable and certain tax system--one, perhaps, that will in part, be based upon income--the income from property--rather than entirely upon its more or less inaccurately estimated physical valuation.⁶³

The McIntosh county welfare board also published a relief study in 1940. The board's report concerned the W.P.A. workers of the county, and their major proposal was to make funds available to W.P.A. clients for farm machinery and livestock, basic requirements needed to send them back to their farms.⁶⁴

⁶³Wishek News, February 15, 1940, pp. 1, 8. There were angry words hurled at Bob Greiser by members of the commission. Greiser was on the executive committee of the NPL and also a member of the commission. The League's preliminary platform contained many of the recommendations of the commission, and some of its members felt Greiser had "leaked" their findings to the NPL. Greiser rebuked his critics, telling them the commission's program had a better chance of getting legislative action if it were sponsored by the major political party in the state. Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁴Gene Hopton to William Lemke, April 8, 1940, Lemke Papers, Box 19, Folder 11. For a detailed account of the board's study see Appendix C. A study of the welfare condition of the state was also conducted by Professor J. M. Gillette, head of the sociology department at the University of North Dakota. Gillette sent out questionnaires to all welfare boards in the state, inquiring about the number of people who had left the county, the number of cases dropped from the relief rolls, and causes for relief status. Neil Quast wrote to John Gillette, March 24, 1941, Gillette Papers, Box 5, Folder 29:

"Farming in this county does not promise to relieve our relief situation to any amount. The future on the farm here is very poor and there is no future for the farm migrant to return to the farm. There is one big thing that has caused much trouble, namely, the early settlers had large families and when the fathers retired the eldest son received the farm and the other boys had to migrate to the city and because of being non-skilled they could find no other employment than WPA."

The excellent crop of 1940 greatly reduced the demands on the relief program. The fine harvest of that year eased the concern many had about losing their W.P.A. jobs. The complaints registered were few and involved minor matters.⁶⁵

Overall, reaction was quite favorable to the government relief programs of the late Thirties. The projects completed in McIntosh county by the W.P.A. included construction of 12 new buildings, a new sewage system for Ashley, an athletic field and grandstand at Zeeland, and repairs to over 3,900 books.⁶⁶ One man noted that "some thought relief wasn't right, and most were glad to get off it, but everybody was in the same boat and needed help."⁶⁷ Because everyone was in trouble, there apparently was no stigma attached to those receiving help. Emil Wiedman observed that "everyone needed help and they didn't care if anyone knew

⁶⁵Jacob Bender to William Langer, July 31, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 102, Folder 4; Ed Isaak to William Langer, July 31, 1940, and August 29, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 102, Folder 4 and 7; Martin Miller to William Langer, July, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 102, Folder 3. These were the only letters sent to Langer concerning relief matters during the spring and summer of 1940. This indicates that the prospects of a good harvest more than compensated for the loss of a low-paying W.P.A. job. Also, Langer held no political office at this time, so people may have felt that he could not help them much.

⁶⁶Wishek News, April 18, 1940, p. 1. In 1939, Greiser also complemented the W.P.A.:

"I never realized or appreciated the fine work the WPA men are doing in Wishek until they built a sidewalk and curb for me. The men take pride in doing a good job; they carefully select and mix the materials they use; the excavated dirt is spread nicely along the walk and when the work is complete it certainly makes a place much better. Thanks boys, I'm a satisfied customer!"

⁶⁷Interview, J. L. Raile, Wishek, September 18, 1971.

it; they didn't hesitate to seek help, though the people would try first to get along with aid from their neighbors."⁶⁸ Walter Froh recalled the tremendous pride of the German-Russians, people who did not like to be dependent on anyone; however, "necessity forced them to accept help--some became accustomed to it--but all wanted to work for a living."⁶⁹ Another citizen recalled "most people did not want to go on relief, but had to to feed their children--there was nothing said about those on relief."⁷⁰ Max Wishek said, "At first people were hesitant to take relief; there was no social stigma on those on relief; however, when things got better, most were eager to get off relief."⁷¹

What was the effect of this federal money on the political affiliations of the North Dakota people? Professor Robinson stated,

This massive outpouring of Federal funds by the Democratic administration in Washington was of the utmost importance to the state, contributing much to its survival and well-being. But such federal assistance did not make North Dakota a Democratic state, nor did it win more than temporary support for President Roosevelt's New Deal among a people long attached to liberal and progressive programs. Basically, North Dakotans were not very happy about their dependent position.⁷²

Robinson's observations are particularly applicable to McIntosh county. As both Froh and Wishek noted, those on relief accepted government aid

⁶⁸Interview, Emil Wiedman, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

⁶⁹Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971. Froh also complemented Wiedman on his "good job running the program."

⁷⁰Interview, H. E. Timm, Wishek, September 18, 1971.

⁷¹Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

⁷²Robinson, North Dakota, p. 109.

reluctantly, and they were eager to become self-sustaining when prosperity returned. Maybe it was an adverse reaction to government-meddling in their lives or disgust with the red tape they had to endure to receive help. Whatever the cause, the McIntosh voters overwhelmingly rejected the Roosevelt administration in the 1940 election. The use of federal money did not convert the Republicans of McIntosh county; in fact, its use apparently reminded these proud people of their dependent status, a reality they found disturbing and distasteful.

As noted above, the importance of relief money declined as prosperity gradually returned through 1939 and 1940. The topic of discussion in the papers and on the street also shifted in this period. People no longer worried about the latest W.P.A. enrollment figures, nor were they as concerned as they had once been about the menace of foreclosure. A new topic had gained the attention of all the people, a topic that would remain visible and viable throughout the election of 1940. This new issue was the European war, which had threatened periodically in the Thirties, but finally erupted in September of 1939. It was an issue that would reawaken slumbering fears and aversions. It was an issue that clouded the political picture in 1940.

CHAPTER V

WAR, POLITICS, AND THE GERMAN-RUSSIANS

Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic attributed to the German-Russians is their anathema for war. They fled Russia in the 1870's to avoid military service and made notable protests against America's involvement in World War I. Their dislike for war has led them to accept a non-interventionist foreign policy as the best policy to keep America out of international altercation.¹ The coming of World War II regenerated some of these feelings. The war also influenced political attitudes in the fall of 1940.

The first letter concerning the tense international situation in the period 1936-1940 came to the Wishek News in 1938. The letter writer was a marine stationed in China. He told about his unit coming under artillery attack from the Japanese, but related how unsuccessful that effort was: "Just to tell you how bad shots they are, they or the Chinks had their armored train alongside of our dugouts and the Japs tried for three days to bomb it. They hit everywhere except the train."²

¹Robinson, North Dakota, p. 366; Wishek, Along the Trails, pp. 422-24; T. R. Baudler, "Who are They?" Ashley Jubilee, pp. 6-9.

²W. F. Zarback to the Wishek News, July 7, 1938, p. 4. Zarback gave an interesting commentary on Chinese life when he described Shanghai as "the filthiest place of them all. A person can buy himself a wife out there for as low as \$10 in American money which is \$35 in Chinese money." This was the only letter during the entire period relating to the situation in the Pacific.

A significant editorial on the war from the Wishek high school paper was printed in the Wishek News in December of 1938: this editorial preceeded any editorial on the war by the major McIntosh papers by almost ten months. The school editor took an internationalist outlook on the world situation and also gave her opinion on the best course of action for the United States to pursue:

The people of this United States were asked by leading people of the country not to take sides over the situation in Europe and to try and keep this country out of the war in the effect that a conflict would break out in Europe. However, we all realize that a country as large as ours, in this day of split-second communications, it is hard to do such. The people during those dark few weeks were swayed from one side to the other by propaganda from European countries, and if war had not been averted in Europe, it is no small guess that this country, through the sympathy of the people, would have eventually entered the war to help protect the small country of Czechoslovakia. It is a question as to how it would be possible for this country to stay out of a war that would revolutionize the world by destroying the young generation and every faze [sic] of civilization. Perhaps the best way, as pointed out by many, is the strengthening of our Army and Navy so that a foreign country would not be tempted to war against this country. Another way is that in case of war in Europe, practice economic nationalism, in this way to keep out of foreign affairs.³

A running debate on the character of Nazi Germany was carried on in the Wishek News in early 1939 by two men, Gottlieb Schmierer and James Bailey. The first volley in the literary war was fired by Schmierer in January, 1939. He was upset because the editor of the Napoleon Homestead had named his pet rooster after the German dictator, Adolf Hitler. Schmierer did not feel Hitler's name should be laughed at because "Hitler is the real man for Germany. All the German people are satisfied with him. And if it wouldn't be for Hitler all of Europe

³Editorial of the Blue and White News, by Lourine Bender, in the Wishek News, December 8, 1938, p. 4.

would be communist already just like Russia."⁴ He felt the real danger to America was Russia, not Germany, and suggested,

Every German person should feel proud that Germany is prospering. The reason that I know that German people are satisfied with the Nazi government is because the Austrian people wanted to join Germany and also the Sudeton Germans.⁵

This letter prompted a reply from Mr. Bailey. Bailey challenged the idea the Austrians wanted to join Germany, and he asked,

. . . what choice did they have in the matter? . . . There can be no doubt as to the reason for Mr. Schmierer's belief that the Austrians and the Chzechs [sic] joined Germany of their own free will. There are many German newspapers in America whose editor only prints stories that sympathies [sic] with Germany's plans and action.⁶

Upset by this attack upon his beliefs, Schmierer defended them in the pages of the News. He was angry because Bailey had called Germany an aggressor nation, and he reminded Bailey that England was not any better. He defended Hitler's expansion, saying "I believe Germany is forced in what she is doing, for that is the only way she can get back which [sic] was robbed from her in the world war."⁷

⁴Gottlieb Schmierer to the Wishek News, January 26, 1939, p. 4.

⁵Ibid.

⁶James Bailey to the Wishek News, February 9, 1939, p. 8.

⁷Wishek News, March 2, 1939, p. 8. Part of the reason for Schmierer's dislike for the communists was revealed when he wrote,

"I have read letters from my relatives in Russia in which it says that two of my uncles were murdered cold blooded, both of my cousins were transferred to Siberia where they were starved to death, and some of my aunts were driven out of their houses and all their property taken away from them. . . . I will help defend my country, the United States and its government to my last breath, for I know we have got one of the best governments of the world and I feel proud of it."

Bailey's next letter again criticized the Hitler regime, especially for its treatment of the churches. He also declared that there was little difference between conditions in Russia and conditions in Germany.⁸

Schmierer immediately attacked Bailey for equating communism and Nazism. He reminded Bailey that "Hitler is the child of the treaty of Versailles"; he did admit that he was upset with the German annexation of Czechoslovakia, but concluded, "it also isn't any more unfair than what England and France done in the world war."⁹

Bailey focused his next letter on Schmierer's faith in the freedoms enjoyed in Nazi Germany, pointing out the plight of the Jews: "You said the majority of people in Germany favor Hitler with the exception of the Jews. Why weren't the Jews allowed to voice their opinion without fear of death, prisons, or exile?"¹⁰

Schmierer had the last word in the controversy. His last letter to the News was somewhat conciliatory, but he could not resist one final attempt to enlighten Bailey. He told Bailey all the anti-German propaganda was being circulated to draw America into a war against Hitler. He wrote,

⁸Ibid., March 16, 1939, p. 4.

⁹Ibid., March 30, 1939, p. 8.

¹⁰Ibid., April 20, 1939, p. 5. He noted that Nazism and communism were alike because,

"both are based upon a common principal that the people be held down and not given actual part in their government and that their common principals of freedom such as religion, speech be literally abolished. . . . I think both are evils."

As long as the German people are satisfied with Hitler and his government we ain't got no business meddling with their affairs, its their concern, not ours. We ain't got no reason to hate and to go to war against Germany just to satisfy the blood thirst of a minority.¹¹

Moreover,

The Jews in Germany are not oppressed on account of their religious confession. . . . But in the drive against the Jews, so far not a single Jew has been killed. . . . Let Europe fight its own battles and keep our soldiers at home.¹²

As the summer of 1939 neared its end, tensions in Europe boiled over, and the long-expected war finally came. On the eve of the war, Bob Greiser predicted:

I do not believe there will be a serious war in Europe as long as Hitler doesn't demand anything which will seriously affect England; as long as he wants a piece of Poland or some other nation. England will not interfere. But when Hitler has reached the point where he will demand the return of former German colonies in Africa, some of which are now in possession of the British Empire, then there might be a real war.¹³

The next day, September 1, Germany marched into Poland, and the war Greiser said would not happen, had arrived.

Both McIntosh papers ran editorials warning the people not to make the same mistakes Americans had made when the last European conflict began in 1914. The News pleaded,

¹¹Ibid., June 1, 1939, p. 8. It would appear from this exchange of letters that both pro and anti-German supporters could be found in McIntosh county. It also seems that Bailey was the more informed and the more discerning of the two. It is important to note that for all his pro-German views, Schmierer was an American first and foremost. He may have had extreme views on the virtues of Nazi Germany, but he did not allow these views to erode his Americanism.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., August 31, 1939, p. 1.

columns of editorials are being written, placing the blame here and there and inciting Americans to form opinions and to take sides. All this is a repetition of what happened here before we entered the World war. . . . Let us hope the United States will not again become enthused over the proposition of saving the world for democracy, a democracy which will accept our help to the point where we really and truly were the cause of winning the World War, a democracy which will, after we have saved it from destruction, repudiate its obligations to us and shows its ingratitude at every opportunity. . . . I would direct this appeal to the American daily newspapers: Please heed the admonition of President Roosevelt wherein he urges that all news be carefully checked as to their accuracy before they are published. Please do not try to mold public opinion through editorials which seek to point the finger of responsibility for this war to a particular person or nation. Please refrain from spreading editorial poison among our people. . . Please remember there are two sides to every argument. . . Please don't print anything that might tend to cause hatred between Americans and Europeans. Please help us remain calm and composed and confident that we will not be dragged into any European conflict.

To the American people I would direct this appeal: Please do not believe everything you read in the newspapers, because much of it is printed to drag us into the European conflict so that somebody might profit by the suffering of women, children and men who inhabit those countries which seemingly cannot keep peace for any length of time.¹⁴

The Tribune ran an editorial from the Jamestown Sun, which was entitled "Lest shed no tears for Poland nor Great Britain." The editorial was a review of diplomatic history since 1918:

. . . it should be remembered that Poland very definitely double-crossed France by signing a non-aggression pact with Germany after having had a military alliance with France for a number of years. . . . Poland mobilized her army along the Czechoslovakian border, demanding her share in the partition of that small nation. It would almost seem to be poetic justice that Poland faces today the same situation. . . . it would be well for us to remember the long series of double-crosses of which Great Britain is guilty and not be misled by any false slogans of 'democracy, religion, and international good faith.'¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid., September 7, 1939, p. 1.

¹⁵Ashley Tribune, September 7, 1939, p. 4.

In the succeeding weeks, the Wishek paper carried many articles and notes on the war, while the Ashley paper ran pictures of, but little commentary on, the war. One unique aspect of the News' coverage was its practice of placing slogans above the title of the paper. These slogans were warnings about the evils and dangers of becoming involved in the war.¹⁶ The Tribune restricted its commentary on the war to a syndicated column by Joseph LaBine, who promised a "concise, factual statement of events in Europe."¹⁷

In McIntosh county the most outspoken critic of the war was undoubtedly Bob Greiser. Using his editorial column as his pulpit, Greiser preached isolationism to his readers during the fall of 1939. Greiser stressed two themes in his attacks on international involvement. First, he opposed the idea that America had to go to war to protect her democratic principles. Second, he criticized all maneuvers by the Roosevelt Administration to put more American materials into the Allied war effort. Greiser did not preach an ethnic allegiance for Germany in his columns, nor were his editorials hostile toward England. He was simply expressing the views of an isolationist who would take any steps necessary to prevent his country from becoming involved in a foreign war.¹⁸ His editorials closely parallel the writings of the later day

¹⁶For a complete list of the slogans, see Appendix E.

¹⁷Ashley Tribune, September 7, 1939, p. 4. The paper acknowledged the existence of propaganda campaigns by both sides in the war, and it wanted to get a neutral commentary on the actual events of the war, so selected LaBine's column to achieve this purpose.

¹⁸Wishek News, September 28, 1939, p. 1; Ibid., October 5, 1939, p. 1; Ibid., October 12, 1939, p. 1; Ibid., October 26, 1939, p. 1; Ibid., November 2, 1939, pp. 1, 8; Ibid., November 16, 1939, p. 1;

America First Committee, the leading American isolationist organization prior to World War II. The "American Firsters" also wanted to keep American materials out of the European conflict and were very vocal in their opposition to Roosevelt's aid to the Allies. Perhaps the most eloquent editorial penned by the county editor concerned the possible effects of America's entry into the war:

It is being said that we must lift the embargo on war materials to the warring nations in Europe. Is it necessary in order that we might become a nation of hired butchers, furnishing knives for slaughter? Do we want to supply bayonets for pay and wax fat on commerce launched in a river of blood? . . . Should we sell munitions to these nations in order to help breaklovers' hearts, fill the eyes of widows with tears and assume the responsibility for the sighs of pitiful, pleading orphans? . . . War is and always has been womanhood's worst enemy. Mothers, wives, and sweethearts of America cry to the heavens and ask the Almighty to save them from another such period of suffering.¹⁹

In August of 1939 a group of McIntosh residents toured Germany at the invitation of the German government. When war broke out in September, these people were caught in the fighting. After a nerve-racking delay in the Netherlands, they sailed to New York, then came by train to North Dakota. One of the weary travelers remarked, once back in Ashley, "There's no country like the USA and I don't think I'll

Ibid., November 30, 1939, pp. 1, 4. The "merchants of death" thesis of Senator Nye found an advocate in Bob Greiser. Greiser was aroused over the fact that the countries at war had borrowed from America during the First World War and had not paid their debt.

¹⁹Ibid., October 19, 1939, p. 1. Greiser told his readers what America had gained from the last war:

"Just widows to fight their lonely way through life; just Gold Star mothers with broken hearts; just shell-shocked boys to pine away and die. A few generals acquired a yard or two of shining braid; a number of profiteers got rich. But most of us received a taste of the bitter ashes of war."

ever want to set foot off it again."²⁰ Rumors circulated about those who made the trip, and one of the travelers felt it necessary to place the following notice in the Tribune:

To whom it may concern: In view of the fact that there has been considerable comment regarding those of us who had the privilege of making a trip to Germany this summer, I feel it my duty to clear the atmosphere of any erroneous conceptions which may still be lurking here and there.

I wish to state, very emphatically, that the so-called German American Bund had nothing to do with the sponsoring of this trip; this is also true of the German government. This trip was sponsored by a teachers organization in Germany, and by inviting us to their country, they did no more than what our teachers organizations in America do. . . . We were simply asked to come and see Germany as it is today, and then go back to the USA and be good citizens.²¹

These travelers wrote of their experiences in a series of letters published in the News and the Tribune. A Lutheran minister sought to dispel certain myths about German life. He

. . . observed no food shortages, in fact, it seemed that there was a great abundance of it, with the exception of butter. . . . Also a myth, he stated, is the story that laborers are driven and over-worked. . . . As far as free speech is concerned, he heard many opinions freely expressed in public places, as well as jokes about officials including Hitler. . . . [he] found that churches were open and anyone who wished could attend. He could see no suppression of religion.²²

²⁰John Bertsch to the Ashley Tribune, October 12, 1939, p. 1. Commenting on the domestic situation in Germany, Bertsch noted, "The German people. . . seem satisfied with their government, have plenty to eat and no one seems to be suffering any hardship."

²¹B. F. Hertzmann to the Ashley Tribune, October 19, 1939, p. 8.

²²Rev. J. C. Jung to the Ashley Tribune, October 19, 1939, p. 1. Rev. Jung found the people "more than satisfied" with Hitler's government. They were not happy to be at war, "but resign themselves to it, unshaken in their belief that England is more or less the cause of it." Asking the people's opinion of the future role of America in the war, Jung found "the sentiment also seems to be that we will enter the war on England's side and if not, we will at least sell her all the munitions we can, since we 'love our dollar' too much and can't resist the

Expressing similar opinions was one of the women in the tour:

At no time and no place did I ever see any signs of starvation. . . . Everywhere people were well dressed. . . . I attended church early every Sunday while in Germany and could notice no religious suppression. They preach the same Gospel and pray to the same God we do.²³

The Wishek News reprinted an article from the Linton Record on the experiences of another German traveler. This man also found the Germans well satisfied:

German people are working, and just about everyone. If there is anything there is a shortage of labor. . . . There has really not been a shortage of food. . . . Hitler is by no means a fool as so many people like to think. He may be a fanatic. He certainly did much for Germany. He united the German people into one great nation. He did away with unemployment. He restored self confidence, and everyone knows that he restored law and order in the land. . . . As to the relation of Government and Church, of course, that was not just as the faithful of the Catholic or Lutheran Church wished, but they hoped that in course of time things would turn out all right.²⁴

One tourist picked an unusual subject to write about, the concentration camps of Germany:

You have heard of the horrors and terrors that confronted prisoners in concentration camps and were perhaps shocked by its brutality. I also was mystified by these reports and was greatly surprised at their falsity. The camp at Welmar reminded me of our soldier camps except that the buildings were of brick. Everywhere was military order and cleanliness. The food was wholesome and healthy and prisoners gained weight during their stay in camp. . . . no prisoner may be touched except by special permission from Berlin. . . . The prisoner is constantly reminded that there is a way for

temptation of making a little profit." Jung also expressed happiness at being back in America, saying, "We are and will be Americans first, last and always." Ibid., pp. 1, 4.

²³Martha Thurn to the Ashley Tribune, November 30, 1939, p. 4. Miss Thurn made an interesting slip when she noted, "Peddlers and beggers are extinct." They may well have been!

²⁴Rev. Father Niebler to the Linton Record, reprinted in the Wishek News, December 14, 1939, pp. 1, 5.

him to get out. He is told time and again: "There is only one way to freedom, its milestones are obedience, industry, honesty, order, cleanliness, soberness, truthfulness, willingness to make sacrifices for and to love your fatherland."²⁵

Another visitor to the camp talked with the guards and was told, "That if a prisoner doesn't behave, the case will be reported to Berlin. From there orders will be given, or the prisoner goes to another camp."²⁶

Bertsch gave his impressions of Austria:

Toward evening we entered Austria. One could notice it at once. Everything was less advanced than in Germany. . . . They [a family he stayed with] told me I should have seen Austria before and now. Then one could tell how Austria has improved.²⁷

These voyagers were all impressed with the progress and comfortable life they found in Germany. They exposed certain rumors about the Nazi government as falsehoods, and tended to reinforce Nazi propaganda about their concentration camps and Anschluss with Austria. What the McIntosh citizens apparently did not realize was that they were seeing the "model" Germany, the Germany that was spotless and untainted. Even the concentration camp they visited seemed to have been an example of the stern, but fair Nazi system of correction (witness Roth's statement about the prisoners gaining weight!). It is also evident from these travel reports that none of the people were converted to the Nazi philosophy. In fact, all returned with stronger feelings of attachment

²⁵Herbert Roth to the Wishek News, December 21, 1939, p. 5. He noted that the men were in the camp not "for the sake of punishment, but for the sake of correction and only in extreme cases, for the sake of detention."

²⁶John Bertsch to the Ashley Tribune, December 29, 1939, p. 1.

²⁷Ibid.

for American principles and mores. None seemed extremely pro-German or expressed views of sympathy for Germany in her war.²⁸ The debate between Schmierer and Bailey, Greiser's editorials, and the excursion to Germany all demonstrate that the McIntosh people were very aware of events outside America, and that they were interested in the course of those events. In each of these instances, those involved made their devotion to America quite clear. The patriotism of these people was never in doubt.

A guest editorial in the News in January, 1940, presented a summary of the McIntosh feelings on the war:

By all means, we in general are opposed to all strife between individuals, groups or nations, and individually I am too. It seems much simpler to let those who have a just cause for argument and dispute, to argue it out to their own satisfaction, rather than implicate whole nations of people who are struggling for existence and a chance to make a living, by mass propaganda or hatred, to the point where they will shoulder a gun and set out to kill another man, merely because he is of a different country, and classed as the enemy.²⁹

Walter Froh was more blunt in stating his beliefs. For him, the central issue in the war was who was going to "boss" Europe. He told his readers, "We have had no part in the making of the present war and, therefore, should have no part in the persecution [sic] of it. Let us

²⁸One tourist who was very outspoken in his support for Hitler was the Ashley chiropractor F. Linnenbuerger. Though this man did not write of his experiences in Germany as the others did, he often spoke of them to the townspeople. At times he became carried away, and would stoutly deny there were any evils in the Nazi system. He became famous in the county for his views, but as Max Wishek recalled, "He was just a loud talker, he never tried to do anything. The people didn't like him much anyway." Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

²⁹Wishek News, January 25, 1940, p. 1. The editorial was written by Rachel Hirning.

plead with you to forget racial sympathies in your relations with your neighbor."³⁰

The Russian attack on Finland brought comment from Bob Greiser:

A terrible picture of the crushing power of war is being given in brave but unhappy little Finland, which has made such glorious resistance to the terrible steam roller of war operated by the Russian government. That a little nation of 4,000,000 people should be able to stand up three months against one of 168,000,000 will go down in history as a miracle of human courage and achievement. Will that awful steam roller go on crushing out human hearts and lives and the freedom of a people who claim only the right to determine their own form of government? If it is so, the world will bitterly regret the loss.³¹

It is significant that in spite of his sympathy for Finland, Greiser did not ask for American aid in any form for her in the battle with Russia.

In another editorial, Greiser recalled how the United States had been drawn into the last European war because of German submarine attacks on American ships. He raised the question, "Will history repeat itself?", and decided it would not for two reasons:

One is that the American people feel thoroughly disgusted with the results of the World War. They made great sacrifices and feel they accomplished little or nothing. The second reason is that the German government, profiting by the lessons of the past, seems rather careful about exciting American wrath. It should continue to show such care.³²

In 1940 both McIntosh editors continued their opposition to American involvement in the war. Noting the allegation that if the Allies were defeated by Germany, America would be Hitler's next target, Greiser wrote, " . . . those fighting nations are going to be pretty weak after

³⁰Ashley Tribune, May 2, 1940, p. 4.

³¹Wishek News, February 29, 1940, p. 1.

³²Ibid., April 4, 1940, p. 1.

the war after mortgaging their assets and burning up a good part of their capital, they are going to be very slow about antagonizing any more nations."³³ Walter Froh believed, "Being neighborly is good and sacrificing our youth is bad. We are grieved nationally over the grave conditions in Europe, but we are not going to do any killing if we can help it."³⁴

Representative Lemke held similar views on the war. Replying to an Ashley man's letter, Lemke wrote:

Yes, I agree with you that we should stay out of this war and that we have mixed into it altogether too much already. Of course I feel sorry for the smaller nations but I feel that if we stay out of the war we will be better able to get them justice in the end than by mixing into it.³⁵

Linnenbuerger also wrote Lemke to express his concern over the publication of the German White Book by the Roosevelt Administration. He told Lemke:

If the World Jewry wants war with Germany let them enlist the Jewish Youth and send them over and do the fighting, but spare our American

³³Ibid., April 11, 1940, p. 1.

³⁴Ashley Tribune, April 18, 1940, p. 4.

³⁵William Lemke to Benjamin Ault, May 3, 1940, Lemke Papers, Box 19, Folder 16. Ault had written to Lemke on April 29, 1940,

"Do I wish that we will stay out of this war I do believe that we really are at war already but we people do not know it as soon as we help one side with anything we do help this side and anyone who want to help one side should be sent over to that country he is no good United States citizen and we are better off [sic] with out them. so [sic] all we do stay out of this war do we want to kill our boys for some one else to play boss."

Youth. England has never been our friend and never will be. If America must fight, let's fight the enemy----England.³⁶

Lemke wrote back:

. . . I am as much opposed to our nation again being drawn into war as you are. We should take care of our own people and mind our own business then we would get along far better. Europe can take care of itself anyway. Of course, I am very sorry that they do so much slaughtering over there, but we cannot stop it.³⁷

One interesting episode in the war scare involved investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in McIntosh county. One such investigation brought the following response from the Tribune:

Ashley recently was visited by a representative of the Federal Department of Justice, who was here to investigate several complaints of un-American or subversive activities on the part of some of the people in this vicinity. The G-man spent most of the day here investigating and inquiring about the city, and from reports now current, he must have left Ashley in a disgruntled frame of mind. Apparently the complaints turned out to be groundless. It seems rather far fetched to imagine that any foreign power is now or ever has been trying to organize local people against our government. . . . There is no doubt that our people, regardless of what country in Europe they or their ancestors may have come from, are 100 per cent Americans. At the same time they are almost unanimous in believing that the future welfare of this democracy rests in a strict policy of non-intervention in the troubles and fights in Europe.³⁸

The source for the concern shown by the Justice Department was the report of gun fire coming from one of the buildings in Ashley. It turned out that a group of Legionnaires were practicing for a rifle meet in the basement, and a Jewish lawyer heard the muffled shots and

³⁶Dr. F. Linnenbuerger to William Lemke, April 1, 1940, Lemke Papers, Box 19, Folder 10. The German White Book was a propaganda publication of the German government.

³⁷William Lemke to Dr. F. Linnenbuerger, April 6, 1940, Lemke Papers, Box 19, Folder 10.

³⁸Ashley Tribune, June 13, 1940, p. 1.

became alarmed. He telephoned the Justice Department and the investigator came out.³⁹ According to one citizen, the lawyer apparently was fearful the Ashley people might prove as anti-Semitic as the people of Germany.⁴⁰

There were some interesting advertisements relating to the war in the county papers during the fall of 1940. The Wishek paper ran two successive items from an ad entitled "Dr. Townsend says." The first pointed out the necessity of a strong national defense program that included policies to "raise the purchasing power of the millions of

³⁹Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

⁴⁰Interview, Emil Wiedman, Ashley, August 3, 1971. In the Ashley Tribune, February 6, 1941, p. 4, Froh chided the government for sending investigators to the county:

"It is also absurd to see the government spend money to send Federal Bureau of Investigation men to McIntosh county to investigate un-American activities. While it is possible that the FBI must have received complaints along this line, yet if war does come, the people of McIntosh county will prove just as loyal supporters of the war as they did in 1917."

Also defending the German-Americans was Senator Nye. In remarks noted in U.S., Congress, Senate, 76th Cong., 3rd sess., August 23, 1940, Congressional Record, LXXXVI, 10806, Nye said,

"The answer is that there is no such thing as a united Jewry or a united body of international Jews. It is ridiculous and inane argument, and ought to be held up for what it is worth.

So ought the matter of the German-Americans. . . . Why are these peoples of German stock here? . . . Most of them came to escape Prussian autocracy--the same kind of autocracy, though perhaps not as bad, as that which rules Germany today. . . . It is the foulest libel that could be written to accuse our Americans of Germanic stock of love for the new autocracy in Germany, as foul a libel as is the libel of the Jews to the effect that American Jews do not care what happens to America so long as Hitler can be subdued in Europe."

submerged people."⁴¹ The second asked the public to

. . . oppose vigilently [sic] any public speaking in our clubs that has a tendency to arouse class or religious or race hatreds. Let us deny speakers' permits to anyone who tries to incite prejudice against Jews, Germans, Negroes or any particular group of people.⁴²

A utilities company placed an ad calling for adequate national defense, a program that was "not only a matter of men, airplanes, battleships and men. . . [but one] that requires us to strengthen our American institutions, which are the very things we wish to protect and preserve."⁴³

Perhaps the most unusual advertisement placed in the papers during the entire 1936-1940 period was by an Ashley clothing store. Congress had just passed the peace-time draft bill, and the store felt some of its potential customers might be affected by the law, so it ran the following announcement:

A defense cooperation money-back certificate will be issued to all men of military age on purchases for personal use, made up to and including November 15th, 1940. Suits, Overcoats, Furnishings, Hats and Shoes may be purchased on this plan. In the event that you are conscripted and actually enter into the service on or before January 18, 1941, this certificate, with your notice of call will entitle you to the privilege of returning your entire purchase for full credit, regardless of wear. . . . You may come to Kebbers and buy your fall requirements with the utmost confidence that you will not incur a needless expenditure. To the public: Merchandise returned under this plan will be donated to the American Red Cross.⁴⁴

⁴¹Wishek News, June 27, 1940, p. 8.

⁴²Ibid., July 4, 1940, p. 8.

⁴³Ibid., July 25, 1940, p. 5. The ad was placed by Dakota Public Service Company, an electrical company.

⁴⁴Ashley Tribune, October 3, 1940, p. 8. Capitalization in original advertisement.

The conscription bill of 1940 was discussed by Bob Greiser on two occasions. Writing in September before the bill became law, Greiser expressed sympathy for

[O]lder mothers [who] remember the day their boys left for France, and those whose boys never returned are among those who now face the possibility of seeing their grandson go to war. . . . We, the common people, wonder what it is all about and why it is being done, but somebody has said we are doing no different than Nature does once every year: Nature permits flowers, grass and crops to grow every summer and comes along in the fall with frost to destroy its work. Maybe war is the general order of things. Just the same, you and I wouldn't like to see our boys and property destroyed because. . . . Why?⁴⁵

After the bill had passed, Greiser observed,

American mothers are having anxious moments over the future of their sons, but they might cry over their own destiny and that of their babies before this thing is over. . . . we must prepare ourselves for sacrifice, at the same time hoping and praying that those same conditions [as in Europe] might not surround us and our nation. America cannot afford to send its soldiers to Europe every 25 years to "save democracy." We must arrange our own affairs in such a way as will make it possible for us to keep out of those conflicts.⁴⁶

There were no other written opinions on the conscription bill, so it appears McIntosh citizens accepted military service without complaining. One man recalled, "We may not like war, but we are patriotic Americans."⁴⁷

⁴⁵Wishek News, September 12, 1940, p. 1.

⁴⁶Ibid., November 14, 1940, pp. 1, 5.

⁴⁷Interview, Emil Wiedman, Ashley, August 3, 1971. Max Wishek served on the draft board during WW II and could not remember having one conscientious objector in the county. Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971. Walter Froh noted, "The people had isolationistic learnings, but this didn't affect their patriotism." Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

It would appear from the material available that the McIntosh residents were isolationists. But their isolation was not due to sympathy with their homeland's cause. The McIntosh people did not want to become involved in the war because they did not want their sons, brothers, or fathers to be killed on European battlefields. One man who lived in the county during the period under study said, "People were isolationist. But they didn't believe in fighting Russia or for Russia, Germany, Polacks or anyone else."⁴⁸ Another man said, "The people are fundamentally against war--even their grandfathers left Germany to get out of the army."⁴⁹ Expressing the consensus opinion most aptly, one man said, "People around here don't like war."⁵⁰

From this examination of war-views, it is evident that the McIntosh citizens were not ethnically motivated in their opposition to American involvement in the European war. Also, it would be a mistake to assume the war was the central factor in the daily lives of the McIntosh residents. Though they were aware of the potential danger that the fighting might involve America, the people were much too concerned with the problem of day-to-day living to worry excessively about a war being fought thousands of miles away. The war was definitely on the minds of most McIntosh citizens, but the concern for the recovery of prosperity was even stronger. Thus, one part of Lubell's ethnic theory of isolationism appears open for re-interpretation.

⁴⁸Interview, John Ackerman, Wishek, September 18, 1971.

⁴⁹Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

⁵⁰Interview, Henry Huerther, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

A second part of Lubell's thesis concerns the exploitation, by political parties, of ethnic prejudices. Such exploitation, according to Lubell, is evidenced in times of international crisis. The 1936-1940 period certainly one of world crisis. How much "exploitation" of international affairs there was in McIntosh county, however, is open to debate.

When the German-Russian settlers came to North Dakota in the nineteenth century, their main concern was to make a living. They took little initial interest in politics for several reasons. Many could not speak or understand English. They entered an area with a government already functioning, so were not obligated to set up one of their own. They had little experience with holding or voting for public office. They commonly expressed resentment toward those who became successful, and this resentment applied to politically active persons. They had an inherent distrust of politicians due to their experience in Germany and Russia.⁵¹

This low level of political interest was changed when the Non-partisan League (NPL) was formed in 1915. The League organizers, often working through German-Russian priests, offered agricultural reform to the immigrant farmers.⁵² Their efforts were very successful among the farmers of McIntosh county, and in time the county became known as one of the strongest NPL centers in North Dakota. League candidates usually carried the county with overwhelming margins in most state elections

⁵¹Sherman, "Assimilation," pp. 97-99.

⁵²Gold, "German-Russians," pp. 44-45.

from 1916 through the 1940's. The League was associated with the Republican party, so national Republican candidates were usually endorsed by the League. The popularity of the League carried over to the Republican candidates, and strong NPL counties were also strong Republican counties. This held true for McIntosh county until 1928, when Al Smith narrowly carried the McIntosh vote. In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt took the county, though the NPL candidates won support for all state offices. In 1936, Alf Landon was over-whelmed nationally and in McIntosh county by Roosevelt, though the county again gave its support to all the League candidates for state office.⁵³

State-wide, politics in the 1930's "was largely the story of determined attacks upon William Langer and his triumph over his adversaries."⁵⁴ Langer had been in and out of state politics since the NPL was formed. By 1932 he had collected enough support within the party to win the nomination for governor, a race he easily won in the general election. Removed from office for allegedly soliciting funds from federal employees, Langer won a lengthy court battle that cleared him of the charge. He then undertook the task of regaining political control of the League from Walter Welford, the man who had eventually

⁵³North Dakota, Secretary of State, Compilation of Election Returns, National and State: 1914-1928. (Hereafter cited as Compilation 1914). Compilation 1930. The national results in McIntosh county for the three elections were: 1928, Smith 1,474 and Hoover 1,196; 1932, Roosevelt 3,078 and Hoover 465; 1936, Roosevelt 1,900 and Landon 1,469. There are two possible reasons for Smith's success in McIntosh county: His support for the repeal of prohibition or Hoover's policy of agricultural price controls during World War I. Robinson, North Dakota, p. 391.

⁵⁴Robinson, North Dakota, p. 409.

become governor after Langer had been removed from office.⁵⁵ The climax of this struggle came in the 1936 election. Langer had lost the NPL primary to Welford, so ran as an independent in the fall election.⁵⁶

The November 3 election brought victory to both Roosevelt and Langer in McIntosh county. Langer's election was not cheered by all those in the county, however. The Tribune's postmortem was very bleak:

A man has been elected to the office of Governor of this state by a minority vote of the people. In other words nearly two thirds of the people of North Dakota for one reason or another, best known to themselves, refused to vote for William Langer. . . The future lies in his hands.⁵⁷

A movement to recall Langer started in March, 1937, but did not garner much support in McIntosh county. One citizen wrote to Langer, "Put on your fighting gloves and fight them to a finish and we will win out. I have talked with most of my customers the last five days and all seem to be against a recall and in your favor."⁵⁸ The Board of Commissioners of McIntosh county sent a resolution to Langer which announced, ". . . the board publically go [es] on record against such [recall] action, and request the taxpayers of this county, not to sign

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 404-04, 409-11.

⁵⁶The NPL paper, The Leader, reviewed the results of the primary and remarked, "McIntosh was another banner county for the League ticket, Langer beating Welford by a majority of more than 1,000 votes. The entire League ticket also came through with splendid majorities without a single exception. . . ." The Leader, July 2, 1936, p. 3. The paper was controlled entirely by Langer and was used as a platform for his views throughout the late Thirties.

⁵⁷Ashley Tribune, November 12, 1936, p. 4.

⁵⁸J. P. Eichhorn to William Langer, April 8, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 81, Folder 2.

such recall petitions."⁵⁹ Langer did not have enough enemies to get the recall petitions into legal operation, and his victory worked to enhance his popularity even more among the McIntosh voters. As noted earlier, Langer was the official most sought out by McIntosh citizens in times of trouble. His willingness to take on their troubles insured their unswerving loyalty to "Wild Bill".

In 1938 Langer gave up certain re-election as governor to run as an independent candidate for United States Senator. A form letter requesting opinions on his chances brought favorable comment from Langer's McIntosh supporters: most felt he had a good chance to win, and many promised to solicit support for him.⁶⁰ Even Langer's enemy, the Tribune, acknowledged that,

Langer will again carry McIntosh county, as his lead of 500 votes in the primary is so large that it cannot be overcome in a three-cornered fight. . . . The fact that Langer is filed in the independent third column will not seriously affect his vote in these parts, as most of his adherents vote for the man.⁶¹

⁵⁹Board of Commissioners to William Langer, April 12, 1937, Langer Papers, Box 81, Folder 2. Langer wrote back, "It was unspeakably nice of you fellows to do this, and assure you all that I appreciate it. We are keeping this new situation rather quiet as I believe that is the best thing to do."

⁶⁰T. T. Donner to William Langer, July 25, 1938, Langer Papers Box 82, Folder 6; Gottlieb Kempf to William Langer, n.d., Langer Papers, Box 82, Folder 8; Adolf Moench to William Langer, August 6, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 82, Folder 8; David Foeders to William Langer, August 2, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 82, Folder 8; Mayer Ourch to William Langer, September 3, 1938, Langer Papers, Box 82, Folder 10.

⁶¹Ashley Tribune, October 27, 1938, p. 8. The strength of Langer is readily apparent in this statement. The writer of the column, Political Polly (who apparently was not Walter Froh), felt Langer could win in the county without official endorsement, all he had to do was file.

The election saw Senator Gerald Nye defeat Langer, John Moses, a Democrat, win the governorship, and Bob Greiser enter the state's senate chamber. In retrospect, one writer saw Langer's defeat as a reflection of the efforts of a diverse coalition of "Conservative Republicans, New Deal Democrats, former Nonpartisans who opposed Langer's tactics, and almost everyone else who disliked the governor."⁶² This postmortem is supported by the McIntosh results. Langer received 1,871 votes to 1,524 for Nye in the county.⁶³ If Nye had to depend on McIntosh county for his victory, he would not have won in 1938.

In 1939 Bob Greiser was elected to the NPL Advisory Committee. Working hard in his new post, Greiser laid the groundwork for Langer's successful return to politics in 1940. When the League's nominating convention was held in March, 1940, the most important nomination, that for United States Senator, was given to Langer. The Congressional nominations were given to Usher Burdick and James Gronna. The by-passing of Representative Lemke was an obvious punishment for his opposition to Langer in the 1938 campaign.⁶⁴

In an effort to create a wider range of support, Langer sent a form letter to people who had benefited from his various moratoriums while he was governor. His letter contained a certain amount of class-appeal:

⁶²Wayne S. Cole, Senator Gerald P. Nye and American Foreign Relations (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), pp. 148-49. (Hereafter cited as Cole, Nye).

⁶³Compilation 1930.

⁶⁴Wishek News, March 14, 1940, p. 5. The Progressive Republicans

I tried to protect the people from those agencies [federal] but nearly landed in jail for my efforts. If I go to the Senate, I will endeavor to get the law liberalized so that these Federal agencies cannot be harsh with poor people, and that the District Judges will have more discretion than they have now. As Governor I tried to be the friend of the poor and the aged, and fought hard to help them keep possession of their homes and property, and did my best to promote the welfare of all the people.⁶⁵

Langer's appeal reminded the McIntosh citizens of all he had done for them, and they let him know he had not been forgotten. Many told him they would do anything he asked, and some even promised to "reform" the few Democrats there were in the county.⁶⁶

Langer's opponents were also active. These regular and progressive Republicans formed a coalition ticket. Their nominee for the Senate was Thomas Whelan, while William Lemke was given the nod for a Congressional seat.⁶⁷ The combination of a Lemke-Whelan ticket brought a snort of disgust from Bob Greiser:

of McIntosh county passed a resolution demanding the recall of Senator Greiser "because he appears to be more interested in his political career than in representing the wishes of the people of Logan and McIntosh counties." Ibid., March 28, 1940, p. 1.

⁶⁵Form letter, William Langer, n.d., Langer Papers, Box 99, Folder 15. Langer asked the people to write to him if they supported him.

⁶⁶August Becker to William Langer, March 27, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 14; Julius Sukut to William Langer, May 5, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 18; Daniel Nickisch, Sr., to William Langer, n.d., Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 17; Jacob Schrenk to William Langer, April 9, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 16; Ed Isaak to William Langer, March 29, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 15; George Ratt to William Langer, March 30, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 15; John Ziegenlaga to William Langer, April 3, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 15; Harold Wolfe to William Langer, March 27, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 98, Folder 14; S. P. Mitzel to William Langer, June 20, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 99, Folder 9; Gottlieb Jenner to William Langer, June 22, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 99, Folder 2.

⁶⁷Wishek News, April 4, 1940, p. 2.

Funny things happen in politics, but North Dakota people had never expected to see the day when Thomas Whelan, state senator from Pembina county, an outspoken opponent of the Nonpartisan League, and William Lemke, hailed by many as the "Purifier of the Nonpartisan League," would both be endorsed for public office by one and the same convention.⁶⁸

Greiser took time out from his attacks on Lemke to blast the politician he hated the most, President Franklin Roosevelt. Referring to rumors that only Roosevelt could keep America out of the European war, Greiser retorted that

with unblushing insolence, New Dealers contend that the president who has FAILED in the domestic field is the only man who can SAVE the country in time of war. The failures of the New Deal have done much to weaken the United States in war-times, by plunging it into debt, inflaming class hatreds, discouraging industrial and farm enterprise, and coddling incendiary criminal aliens. . . . The only sure way to keep out of war is to keep Franklin D. Roosevelt out of the White House after next January.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Ibid., April 4, 1940, p. 1. Greiser had suspected such a move was afoot, as indicated by an Wishek News editorial, March 21, 1940, p. 8:

"Imagine Frazier, Lemke, Whelan and Fowler all on the same political wagon, trying to convince the public that they really have a bag of fresh-roasted and fine tasting peanuts, which they are willing to give to the people before taking out the choice one for themselves. Its going to be hard for such a combination to put anything over on the people."

⁶⁹Ibid., May 9, 1940, p. 1. Emphasis in original letter. The Willkie boom had already begun in the Republican party. One man who was hardly thrilled by the prospect of his party being led by Wilkie was Usher Burdick. His dislike for Wall Street and eastern bankers was evident in a speech given before the House, recorded in U.S., Congress, House, remarks by Representative Burdick, 76th Cong., 3rd sess., June 19, 1940, Congressional Record, LXXVI, 8641:

"Is the great Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln to be sacrificed on the utility altar by nominating Wendell Willkie for the highest office of our country? We Republicans in the West want to know if Wall Street, the utilities, and the international bankers control our party and can select our candidate.

I believe I am serving the best interests of the Republican

The June primary involved contests between some of the most famous politicians North Dakota has produced. Fighting for the Republican nomination for Senator were Thomas Whelan, William Langer, and Lynn Frazier. Seeking the Republican nominations for Representative were James Gronna, Walter Welford, William Lemke, and Usher Burdick. Seeking the Republican nomination for governor were Lewis Orlady and Jack Patterson. The major interest was on the contests between the Republican candidates for governor and Senator.⁷⁰

The European war diverted attention from the state political contest once France became involved. One later chronicler has noted:

The newspapers were filled with war news, and political candidates did not receive much front page attention. The deteriorating European conflict appeared more interesting to the voters than the state's political affairs. They listened to the radio for the latest news and comments on the European war instead of attending political rallies.⁷¹

The candidate hurt most by the war was Senator Frazier. President Roosevelt, in May, 1940, asked for a two ocean navy and larger appropriations for armaments. He made specific reference to the role of Senate

Party by protesting in advance and exposing the machinations and attempts of J. P. Morgan and the New York utility bankers in forcing Wendell Willkie on the Republican Party. Money I know talks. . . .

There is nothing to the Willkie boom for President except the artificial public opinion being created by newspapers, magazines, and the radio. The reason back of all this is money. Money being spent by someone, and lots of it. . . . "

⁷⁰Peter L. Kramer, "William Langer's Victory in the 1940 Senatorial Election" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1967), p. 72. (Hereafter cited as Kramer, "Langer 1940").

⁷¹Ibid., p. 52. This was Kramer's personal opinion.

isolationists who had opposed his plans for national defense. One of these Senators was Lynn Frazier.⁷² The President's charges made the isolationist Senators appear disloyal, an image Frazier spent most of his campaign trying to dispel with the argument, "the United States faced no immediate danger of attack from any nation."⁷³ Whelan's entry into the race boosted Langer's cause, because both Frazier and Whelan were from the northeast part of the state, thus splitting the vote in that area. The election results showed Langer to be the victor in the Senate contest: Frazier had 48,441 votes, Whelan 42,271, and Langer 61,538.⁷⁴ In McIntosh county, Langer gathered 1,538 votes to 719 for Frazier and 417 for Whelan.⁷⁵ Langer's German-Russian friends had not forgotten him.

Having disposed of one of his major enemies, Langer was about to be challenged by another. Rumors circulating after the primary that Lemke might give up his Congressional nomination and run as an independent against Langer proved true as Lemke announced his candidacy for the Senate in September.

⁷²Edward C. Blackorby, Prairie Rebel: The Public Life of William Lemke (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), pp. 247-48. (Hereafter cited as Blackorby, Prairie Rebel).

⁷³Kramer, "Langer 1940," p. 64.

⁷⁴Compilation 1930. The support for the NPL candidates by county voters led Bob Greiser to conclude, "it indicates that the people are still in sympathy with what this organization offers them." Wishek News, July 18, 1940, p. 1.

⁷⁵Compilation 1930.

The national nominating conventions were held in July. On the eve of the Republican session, the News listed the criteria the American public sought in their next leader:

1. To keep the country out of war;
2. To see that the country is amply defended if attacked;
3. That aid be given to the countries fighting against aggression, in as far as such aid can be given without pushing the United States into war;
4. Policies that will put unemployed to work at good paying jobs.⁷⁶

Wendell Willkie received the nomination for President from the Republicans, while Franklin Roosevelt broke Presidential tradition by accepting the Democratic nomination for a third term. Bob Greiser said nothing about Willkie's selection, but blasted Roosevelt's nomination:

The nomination of President Roosevelt for a third term was a foregone conclusion when it became known that 40 per cent of the delegates to the Democratic convention were men and women who hold public office. . . . the fact that he violated a democratic tradition by accepting nomination for a third term has disgusted many Democrats. . . . Re-electing Roosevelt for a third term will bring this country as near to a dictatorship as it is possible to get under our form of government.⁷⁷

One man who took note of Willkie's nomination and subsequent campaigning was William Langer. Langer telegraphed Willkie about the latter's declining support in North Dakota:

When you were chosen, the public belief was that your selection would rejuvenate the Republican party. The farmers and laboring people especially were sick politically of Hoover and Landon. . .

⁷⁶Ibid., July 4, 1940, p. 1.

⁷⁷Ibid., July 25, 1940, p. 1. In a Wishek News editorial, August 29, 1940, p. 1, Greiser asked the following questions:

"Who nominated Hitler? Hitler
 Who nominated Mussolini? Mussolini
 Who nominated Stalin? Stalin
 Who nominated Roosevelt? Roosevelt"

your choice was hailed as a departure from the kind of government the public thought we would have had if the Republican party was dominated by either one of these two men.

Your association with them since has already done you irreparable harm, and frankly unless that association is discontinued in the public mind, and unless it is made clear that your administration will not be dominated by the kind of thought that they represent in the estimation of the public, you will have no chance of carrying this State, or I believe the nation. . . But unless you do something like. . . [choose new campaign managers] then all President Roosevelt has to do is to sit in the White House and be re-elected. Messrs. Landon and Hoover cannot bring you one single vote.⁷⁸

The administration's decision to increase the size of the W.P.A. roll in the fall was seen by Greiser as an attempt to buy votes:

Now it appears that politics again requires use of the W.P.A. to help the third-term attempt of Candidate Roosevelt. As for Candidate Roosevelt, he is too much preoccupied by the Battle of Britain to discuss such domestic questions as the debauchery of the W.P.A.⁷⁹

Willkie's campaign train traveled through North Dakota in October. Bob Greiser was one of many reporters covering Willkie's major speech in Fargo. He noted the crowd's enthusiasm for the Republican candidate, and he expressed the hope "that the slogan 'We Will Win With Willkie' will put the ticket over in November."⁸⁰

Greiser took a grassroots pool of McIntosh public opinion in September, and he found many Willkie supporters:

⁷⁸Telegram, William Langer to Wendell Willkie, August 9, 1940, Langer Papers, Box 99, Folder 10. Langer's reference to the farmers' dislike of Hoover and Landon may be a clue to their earlier rejection of those two candidates. Its also interesting to note that Langer had no qualms about telling a presidential candidate how to run his campaign!

⁷⁹Wishek News, September 5, 1940, p. 1. Greiser charged FDR with increasing the W.P.A. rolls in 1934, 1936, and 1938 to help his party win the elections in those years.

⁸⁰Ibid., October 3, 1940, p. 1.

I am surprised, and yet I am not, at the number of farmers who tell me they are fed up on soil conservation and the like. WPA workers tell me there is no future for them under the present plans and they are going to vote for Willkie. Mothers tell me they think Roosevelt, like Wilson, will lead us into war and because they love their boys, they will vote for Willkie. Others say you cannot build prosperity by destroying the fruits of the soil, nor can you acquire riches by borrowing money. Gosh! It seems like Roosevelt didn't have a friend left outside of those who are on his payroll.⁸¹

With the knowledge that his readers shared his dislike of Roosevelt, Greiser unleashed a barrage of assaults on the Democratic candidate in the later part of the campaign. Noting the Democratic candidates were Roosevelt and Wallace, the News explored the significance of their initials:

Roosevelt
And
Wallace

Read the caps down and they spell RAW. Perhaps that refers to the Democratic Chicago convention--certainly it well might. Read the caps up and they spell WAR. A clairvoyant would make much of such a coincidence--or is it? Perhaps the handwriting is on the wall for him who will to read.⁸²

Greiser also expanded his earlier attack on the third-term attempt of Roosevelt. Notifying his readers that Republican national chairman Joe Martin had designated October 23 as "Anti-Third Term Day", the Wishek editor explained what would happen:

Republican organizations, both men's and women's are completing plans, and mapping out programs for that day, stressing the feeling in their localities against the third term idea. Other groups are

⁸¹Ibid., September 12, 1940, pp. 1, 8. This is a very significant editorial because it established definite discontent with the Roosevelt administration by the voters of McIntosh county. Their discontent would be more clearly expressed in the November election.

⁸²Ibid., September 26, 1940, p. 5.

organizing for household and neighborhood radio parties to be held in the evening in all sections, to hear Wendell Willkie over a nation-wide hookup, when he will discuss the same subject.⁸³

This concluded comment on the national campaign by the McIntosh papers. The final two weeks before the election were devoted to state political coverage.

One feature of the national campaign carried over to the state contests. That feature was a focusing of attention on political personalities, rather than on political issues. Most of the McIntosh attention in the national campaign centered on Franklin Roosevelt and his leadership qualities. The state campaign centered on three men: Lynn Frazier, William Lemke, and William Langer. Because Frazier had been eliminated in the primary, the voters were left with a choice between Lemke and Langer. But was there really much difference between these men, besides their personalities? Both were acknowledged champions of the underdog, both sought to improve the lot of the farmer, both worked relentlessly for North Dakota, and both held similar isolationist foreign policy views. Thus, the choice seemed to narrow down to a vote for the flamboyant Langer or a vote for the steady Lemke.⁸⁴

⁸³Ibid., October 17, 1940, p. 8. In spite of his efforts to make the third-term attempt a major issue, Greiser could not convince many of his readers that it was because he never gave additional space to the issue.

⁸⁴Nels Lillehaugen, "A Survey of North Dakota Newspaper Opinion on Foreign Affairs, 1934-1939" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wyoming, 1951), p. 120. (Hereafter cited as Lillehaugen, "Newspaper Opinion"). Writing ten years later, Lillehaugen stated Langer's

"daring domestic policy in the state was chiefly instrumental in electing him to the Senate. His stand on international issues was not a conclusive factor in his being sent to the Upper Chamber in

The issue of personalities developed slowly in McIntosh county. Walter Froh, writing two weeks before election day, felt the political activity was very quiet:

With the general election on November 5, only a matter of a little over two weeks off, very little activity has been evident. Possibly people have been too busy to pay much attention to the election so far in advance. At any rate, it's been quiet with the result that this campaign so far appears to be one of the cleanest on record, without smut and anonymous attacks on candidates.⁸⁵

That peaceful atmosphere disappeared when Bob Greiser uncovered the source of one of Lemke's campaign practices. Before he left the House, Lemke sent a letter to his colleagues, asking them for their opinion of his accomplishments while in Congress.⁸⁶ He used these letters as testimonial support from their authors, a devious practice exposed by the News. Under a headline exclaiming, "William Lemke's 'Endorsements' Exposed," Greiser gave the background to these endorsements:

Nightly they [North Dakotans] would hear these "mementos" being read over the radio and from the public platform by Mr. Lemke and his henchmen as endorsements for the congressmen in his current campaign for the United States Senate. . . His letter [to the Congressmen] gave the impression that he was retiring to private life and he is, even though he didn't think so when he dispatched

Washington because, in the final analysis, he stood for the same type of isolationism as Nye--except that he was perhaps even more extreme in his opposition to England and France."

⁸⁵Ashley Tribune, October 17, 1940, p. 1.

⁸⁶Wishek News, October 17, 1940, p. 1. The favorable responses were read by Lemke as testimonies of support. In part the letter read:

"I would appreciate receiving a short letter from you, stating frankly your opinion of my accomplishments and efforts for agriculture and labor. That is, my efforts in behalf of the under-dog. I have attempted to serve the people who really need help. I felt that the big fish could take care of themselves. In my efforts I have had many disappointments as I am sure you no doubt have had.

this plea to his colleagues. . . . He has carefully pointed out that several Republicans and Democrats have spoken kind words of praise for his record in congress. But not once has he let his listeners in on the little secret of how these "endorsements" were obtained--through trickery and fraud.⁸⁷

Lemke did have his supporters in McIntosh county. One man told Lemke's campaign headquarters in Fargo he had given several Lemke cards to people in Lehr, and one man told him, "I was going to vote for the Democratic candidate, but I guess the only way we can beat Langer is vote for Lemke, as we sure don't want Langer to win."⁸⁸

Langer made an issue of neutrality and national defense in his campaign. One of his pledges that was surely welcomed in McIntosh hearts was:

However, I want your honest opinion of my work and worth in Congress. Don't hold any punches. Make it short and snappy. I shall file those letters as a memento by which to remember all of my colleagues who wish to respond."

⁸⁷Ibid., Langer also used personal letters in his campaign. On October 30, 1940, he sent handwritten letters to many of his campaign workers, Langer Papers, Box 99, Folder 12. This personal appeal to help the underdog carries an obvious sympathy factor with it, a factor that would be remembered on November 5.

"My two opponents have behind them an organization of employees of the Federal Government. Mr. Vogel, as National Committeeman of the Democratic Party has at his command thousands of Federal office holders, while Senators Frazier and Nye have come to North Dakota with the secretaries and stenographers who are being paid out of the tax payers' money and who have been working day and night for weeks in an effort to elect Mr. Lemke. The only way I can offset the methods being used by those two men is to depend upon personal friends like yourself. . . If you will be so good as to speak to several of your friends and neighbors, and carry my message to them, asking them to support me, I will consider it an act of great kindness to me."

⁸⁸Henry Lemke of Wishek to A. G. Sundfor, November 2, 1940, Lemke Papers, Box 21, Folder 9.

I will never vote to send our boys to Europe. Fathers and mothers, I want you to know that never by any vote of mine will you be betrayed into making cannon fodder of your sons and daughters; but I also want the citizens of North Dakota to know that I believe in thorough preparations for war; . . . I will vote and work along the same lines as did the late U. S. Senator Gronna of North Dakota in the last World War.⁸⁹

Another Langer pamphlet read,

As your U. S. Senator, I will NEVER vote to send your boys to die on Europe's battlefields. I will fight, with you, for an adequate national defense, for a navy and air fleet UNSURPASSED, ready to defend us against any foreign foe at a moment's notice.⁹⁰

On another occasion he announced his support for a resolution passed by the national convention of the American Legion;

The legion stated that its members did not believe that it will be necessary for this Nation to become involved in the present European war and insisted and demanded that the President of the United States and the Congress pursue a policy that, while preserving the sovereignty and dignity of this Nation, will prevent involvement in this conflict.⁹¹

⁸⁹"An Advocate and Worker for Peace," Langer Papers, Box 99, Folder 13. In an earlier speech, Langer had called for a broad national defense program; "[one] not only to [provide] an adequate defense but to defend the entire western hemisphere, and to see to it that no foreign foe gets a foothold within it. . . . [and] an international bank to tie us together in trade and business and social intercourse." Wishek News, June 20, 1940, p. 1. This philosophy would place Langer in what John Cooper has labeled the ultranationalist branch of isolationism. This group opposes intervention and activities outside the Western Hemisphere. John Milton Cooper, Jr., The Vanity of Power: American Isolationism and the First World War, 1914-1917, Contributions in American History, No. 3., ed. by Stanley Kutler (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1969), pp. 3, 62-63, 214, 216. In his book, Cooper found Gronna to be one of four senators to vote against all measures involving American intervention prior to World War I.

⁹⁰Pamphlet, Langer Papers, Box 99, Folder 13. Emphasis on original pamphlet.

⁹¹Statement on neutrality, n.d., Langer Papers, Box 99, Folder 14.

The November 5 election saw William Langer return to political office as he collected 100,647 votes to 92,593 for Lemke and 69,847 for the Democratic candidate Charles Vogel.⁹² Governor Moses was also victorious, as was President Roosevelt. In McIntosh county the most popular candidates were Langer, Patterson, and Willkie.⁹³ The Wishek News restricted its postmortem comments to the contest for governor, suggesting it was better to choose the governor and legislature from the same party (the state had elected a Democratic governor and a Republican legislature) because "when the responsibility is divided, there is a tendency to claim credit for that which is considered good and blame someone else for that which deserves criticism."⁹⁴

One Lemke supporter expressed his displeasure with the results of the election:

Received your letter stating that Langer again used the dem to get the vote. Am feeling sorry for you losing out in this election. It is a shame and a disgrace for our country that two men like Langer and Roosevelt got elected. What are we going to do now?⁹⁵

Other writers found different causes for the election results. Edward Blackorby, Lemke's biographer, noted,

Langer benefited from Willkie's strength in the state. The latter carried thirty-seven counties as compared to Roosevelt's sixteen.

⁹²Compilation 1930.

⁹³Ibid., Langer had 2,630 votes to Lemke's 912, Patterson had 2,644 votes to Moses' 1,115, and Willkie had 3,494 to Roosevelt's 318.

⁹⁴Wishek News, November 14, 1940, p. 1.

⁹⁵Lawrence Fuatier to William Lemke, December 28, 1940, Lemke Papers, Box 19, Folder 10.

Of the thirty counties that Langer carried, twenty-five were counties which had been won by Willkie. . . . When there was a choice between Langer and Lemke, the counties known by North Dakota politicians as the German counties were inclined to choose Langer.⁹⁶

Wayne Cole cited Nye's attacks on Roosevelt's foreign policy, and decided that "though they had given their electoral votes to Roosevelt in 1932 and 1936, North Dakota voters in 1940 apparently shared Nye's view of the President and Willkie easily carried the state."⁹⁷

The main actor in the electoral play of 1940 was undoubtedly William Langer. His campaign gathered most of the state political attention, and he shared equal newspaper coverage with the national politicians in the later stages of the presidential campaign. Langer dominated the political coverage of McIntosh county throughout 1940. This might be expected because of Greiser's connection with Langer, and it might also be a reflection of the people's interest in Langer. He had long been a friend of the people of the county, and his efforts in his second term to help them make the McIntosh citizens even more inclined to support Bill Langer. One voter of that time recalled thirty years later that "Bill Langer was the poor man's friend and he always worked hard for the state of North Dakota."⁹⁸ Another voter of the same

⁹⁶Blackorby, Prairie Rebel, pp. 254-55. Langer and Lemke both had German ancestry.

⁹⁷Cole, Nye, pp. 174-75. One politician who was expected to comment on Roosevelt's candidacy, but who did not, was John Moses. One follower of Moses noted, "Whether or not Moses was either whole-heartedly for or against Roosevelt seeking a third term was kept to his own counsel." Adam Schweitzer, "John Moses and the New Deal in North Dakota" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1954), p. 128.

⁹⁸Interview, Henry Huerther, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

period recalled the people "would give their right arm for Langer, although he usually thought of himself first."⁹⁹ Another voter said, "Langer was for the common people. Some said he was just a damn crook, but he always found a way out. He was a friend of the poor people."¹⁰⁰ One man remembered Langer years after his death "as a person who would help out the big or small. I voted for him for what he did for the people."¹⁰¹ Walter Froh, a Langer opponent, said,

He helped the people. He was like a bull in a china shop, throwing his weight around, but the word got around if you wanted help, write Langer. His embargo and moratoriums saved many farmers, and they felt he was on their side.¹⁰²

Another of Langer's opponents recalled, "In Congress, he was just a choreboy, but he was proud to be one for North Dakota. He threw his weight around, made many claims, but got away with it because he did things for the people."¹⁰³ One of Langer's most faithful supporters in the county cited two main reasons for Langer's strong showing in the county:

He was for the common people--he liked to fight big money. His contact with the people made him famous. When you wrote a letter

⁹⁹Interview, insurance salesman, Ashley, August 3, 1971. He said whenever Langer was involved in any political deal the priorities were, "Langer first, Langer second, then the public, then Langer again."

¹⁰⁰Interview, Elmer Sperling, Lehr, September 4, 1971. He felt some of Langer's programs were too extreme, as he related, "Langer had some of Stalin's ideas. I wonder if he didn't get ahold of his books."

¹⁰¹Interview, Ernest Oberlander, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

¹⁰²Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹⁰³Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

to him, you got a letter back, whether you were a friend or enemy of him. He never forgot a friend.¹⁰⁴

One politician summarized Langer's effect by saying, he--Langer--was "one man who could always get a big meeting out."¹⁰⁵ Langer's popularity among the German-Russians of McIntosh county may even have carried over to the national election of 1940. When asked if Langer might have had any effect on the national results of that election, one man stated

¹⁰⁴Interview, J. L. Raile, Wishek, September 18, 1971. Raile was quite right about the letters to Langer. In the Langer Papers at the University of North Dakota, I found 160 letters to Langer from McIntosh voters in the 1936-1940 period. Of these 160 letters, 5 pertained to general agriculture, 9 to feed and seed matters, 27 to foreclosures and collections, 16 to federal relief jobs, 17 to relief matters, 15 to the Frazier-Lemke Act, 36 political letters, and 15 relating to miscellaneous matters. This total does not include the letters of application for state jobs, most of which came in 1936 when he was elected for his second term as governor.

The source of Langer's popularity was examined by James Ertresvaag, "The Persuasive Technique of William Langer" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1960), pp. 122-25. His findings are reflected quite well in McIntosh county:

"Langer's chief stock in trade became the farmers' feelings of dissatisfaction and his tendency to blame all his ills upon those malignant powers personified in "Big Business". . . . Both Mr. Langer's public speeches and his actions were calculated to strengthen the impression he sought to convey of a fearless, independent champion of the underdog standing alone in the forefront of battle, dynamic and incorruptible--a gallant, clever knight of the prairie tilting against incredible odds. . . . His warm personality, the readiness with which he made himself accessible to people from all walks of life, his careful attention to the smallest problems of his constituents all tended to reinforce this political image. . . . Langer's language was the language of the people. It was emotional, it was colloquial, often colorful and spiced with slang. He talked to the North Dakota farmer in language the farmer understood and, more important, recognized as his own. . . . His campaign formula was a simple one--action and noise, plus accessibility, plus personal factors, plus emotion produced votes."

¹⁰⁵Interview, Gail Hernett, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

very emphatically, "Sure, Langer influenced the vote."¹⁰⁶ Another man felt Langer was a definite factor in the national outcome, since "McIntosh county is strong Langer country."¹⁰⁷

In 1940 McIntosh county showed the greatest decline in its vote for Franklin Roosevelt of any county in the nation. This change is cited by Lubell as proof of his ethnic thesis of isolationism. He reasons that the decline in the Democratic vote from 1936 to 1940 reflects the county's fear that Roosevelt would take America to war against Germany. One student of German-Russian history agrees that the drop in the Democratic totals, not only in McIntosh county but in all German-Russian counties, was a reflection of the ethnic-isolationist theory; William Sherman states,

The reaction against Roosevelt in 1940 must certainly have had nationalistic roots. In 1939 and 1940 saw Congressional debates on the question of the repeal of the Arms Embargo provisions of the Neutrality Act. Roosevelt's followers, as the Wilson administration had done a generation before, seemed to be seeking war with Germany. But, even more, this meant a return of conscription which to the German-Russians had always been a dreaded eventuality.¹⁰⁸

Another writer expresses a similar view:

. . . the German-Russians considered the Democratic party a party of war and as the party of conscription; both Democratic characteristics were strongly antithetical to the German-Russian beliefs and historical antecedents in Germany and Russia. It was not pro-German feeling, and obviously not anti-Soviet feeling that prompted the election returns of German-Russian counties in 1940, but anti-war and anti-conscription feelings.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹⁰⁸Sherman, "Assimilation," p. 90.

¹⁰⁹Gold, "German-Russians," p. 40. This is Gold's personal opinion.

That the people were isolationist seems evident. Bob Greiser undoubtedly was the number one spokesman for the McIntosh isolationists. His editorials from September, 1939 through November, 1940 expressed one theme: American non-involvement in the European war. He held no sympathy for either side; he just wanted to prevent the loss of American life in a foreign struggle that America had no stake in. Walter Froh, though he curtailed his oratory on the subject, was also an isolationist. He recalled many years later that "the possibility of being involved in the European war was on everyone's mind. All hoped we wouldn't be."¹¹⁰ An Ashley banker, long after the event, felt the people disliked war and when the European conflict started, there wasn't much talk about it, though most were thinking about it.¹¹¹ A Zeeland banker was even more definite about his people's outlook: "People here were isolationist. They came here to avoid the draft in Russia because they wanted to escape war."¹¹² Did the German-Russian isolationism account for the McIntosh shift in 1940? From the evidence examined, it does not appear isolationism alone was the motivating factor in the political shift of 1940. There were too many conflicting forces reacting at the same time to allow one to be termed the catalyst. That the people feared another American war is obvious, but as one voter recalled, "Isolation was an issue, but not a real strong one."¹¹³

¹¹⁰Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹¹¹Interview, F. F. Bender, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

¹¹²Interview, Gail Hernet, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

¹¹³Interview, John Ackerman, Wishek, September 18, 1971. Professor Robinson holds a different view. His explanation of Roosevelt's

Walter Froh said the citizens of McIntosh county "were far enough removed from that generation [those who had fled Russia because of their fear of war] that you can't say it [reason for their voting behavior] was just fear of war."¹¹⁴ One observer of the period felt,

If North Dakota was isolationist for a time, economic conditions had much to do with this factor. These crucial years of world history were trying years for North Dakotans for they suffered with droughts, grasshoppers, rust and low prices making survival actually difficult. These trials bred a spirit of independence which was reflected in the thinking of North Dakota. The state believed it had enough troubles without going out to invite more.¹¹⁵

This connection between isolationism and economic conditions can easily be applied to McIntosh county in the late Thirties. Many of Greiser's editorials attacked Roosevelt for meddling in foreign affairs while the domestic situation continued to deteriorate. At the same time, the people were writing letters to their elected representatives, asking for farm relief, not giving foreign policy advice.

If isolationism alone is not the explanation for the political reversal of 1940, what are some other possibilities? One very important factor overlooked by Lubell when he derived his ethnic isolation thesis to explain the Roosevelt reversal in McIntosh county is the traditional political tendency of the county. Of all the presidential elections from 1892 through 1968, McIntosh voters have supported Democratic candidates only three times: 1928, 1932, and 1936. This circumstance in itself would tend to classify McIntosh county as a traditionally

defeat stresses isolationistic reaction, Robinson, North Dakota, p. 415.

¹¹⁴Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹¹⁵Lillehaugen, "Newspaper Opinion," p. 123.

Republican county, but even stronger evidence for such a classification comes from a study of Congressional and Gubernatorial votes. In all Congressional contests from 1892-1970, McIntosh voters supported Democratic candidates only twice--W. F. Purcell for Senator in 1914 and P. W. Lanier for Representative in 1930. In all Gubernatorial contests from 1892-1968, McIntosh voters supported the Democratic candidate only once--Frank O. Hellstrom in 1914.¹¹⁶ With this record in mind, it is hardly surprising that Willkie should attract a large following in the county. As one citizen put it, "I was a Democrat and there were damn few Democrats around here!"¹¹⁷ Perhaps the real question is why these staunch Republicans voted for Roosevelt in the first place. The evidence available on this matter indicates one main reason for Roosevelt's two victories. That reason is economic. Several persons who were questioned about Roosevelt's popularity suggested economics as the reason. Walter Froh said, "The people felt things can't get worse, that's why they voted for Roosevelt in 1932 and

¹¹⁶Compilation 1914; Compilation 1930; North Dakota, Secretary of State, Compilation of Election Returns, National and State: 1946-64; North Dakota, Secretary of State, Blue Book 1911; Grand Forks Herald, November 6, 1968, p. 12; Grand Forks Herald, November 4, 1970, p. 2; Fargo Forum, November 6, 1912, p. 1. After checking the 1944 election results, George Gallup in, The Gallup Political Almanac for 1946, (Princeton: American Institute of Public Opinion, 1946), p. 216, stated

"McIntosh county, North Dakota, on the southern boundary of the state, was the most Republican county in the nation in 1944. This county, after going Democratic in 1932 by nearly 7 to 1, turned around and went Republican eight years later by more than 10 to 1. The 1944 vote, Dewey, Republican, 92.2% of the major party vote; Roosevelt, Democrat, 7.8%."

¹¹⁷Interview, Ed Rau, Ashley, August 3, 1971. Max Wishek recalled that the Democratic county chairman needed only a few precincts to cover the entire county, while the Republicans had over twenty-five precincts. Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

1936."¹¹⁸ Another stated, "People voted for FDR as a protest against economy--they were hungry and losing their farms."¹¹⁹ A farmer recalls that he voted for Roosevelt because "FDR brought people back on their feet. Nothing was done about the depression before drought came and then Roosevelt helps us."¹²⁰ One NPL politician recalls the people voted for Roosevelt because "the depression's low prices forced them to do something for a change."¹²¹ Why did the people leave the benevolent Roosevelt in 1940 then? One politician said, "In 1940 conditions improved and crops came back, so people forgot FDR. The prime reason for the change was that the people were Republicans. They had been Republicans before and they returned."¹²² Walter Froh felt the change in 1940 was due to the "pendulum of Republicanism swinging back. Also Democrats traditionally go into war and this had some effect."¹²³ Another McIntosh resident felt, "People got on their feet in 1940 when things got better. First good crop was in 1939 and it was better in 1940."¹²⁴

¹¹⁸Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹¹⁹Interview, Gail Hernett, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

¹²⁰Interview, Christian Gross, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹²¹Interview, J. L. Raile, Wishek, September 18, 1971.

¹²²Interview, H. E. Trimm, Wishek, September 18, 1971. Trimm could not recall Willkie making much of a "spread" in McIntosh county among the older people.

¹²³Interview, Walter Froh, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹²⁴Interview, Ernest Oberlander, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

What other factors besides traditional Republicanism and economics contributed to the Roosevelt reversal? One man advanced an interesting personality theory. He felt that Franklin Roosevelt was taking advantage of Theodore Roosevelt's good name to confuse the voter. That Franklin's personality more than his philosophy contributed to his popularity in McIntosh county: "But when Willkie came along, they liked his German name. Besides people were beginning to get a little crop and a little hay. Basically people here are Republicans."¹²⁵ Another man said, "The people sat eight years with FDR and couldn't do a damn thing. They wanted a change."¹²⁶ Max Wishek felt the shift was the result of three factors: "McIntosh is a strong Langer county. Willkie had a German name. And the people were dissatisfied with the economic conditions."¹²⁷ Also stressing a variety of causes was J. L. Raile. He felt that the people were afraid,

because the government destroyed the livestock and the next time it might be people. . . . Roosevelt's try for a third term turned people against him. People felt things were brewing [the war] and the German people feel the Democrats favor war more than the Republicans so they went for Willkie.¹²⁸

The newspapers of McIntosh county did not dwell on ethnicity during the 1936-1940 period. The politicians of the state and national parties did not dwell on ethnicity during the campaign of 1940. And the people apparently did not discuss any issue in the period from an

¹²⁵Interview, John Ackerman, Wishek, September 18, 1971.

¹²⁶Interview, Gail Hernet, Ashley, August 3, 1971.

¹²⁷Interview, Max Wishek, Ashley, September 4, 1971.

¹²⁸Interview, J. L. Raile, Wishek, September 18, 1971.

ethnic basis. These factors would tend to negate Lubell's theory, yet there may be something in the Lubell thesis that cannot be observed. Perhaps there was an unconscious feeling expressed, one that the people did not realize they were exhibiting. To investigate this possibility, a statistical study was done on central North Dakota. The results of that study, recorded in the following chapter, show the strengths and weaknesses of the Lubell thesis of ethnicity.

CHAPTER VI

A STATISTICAL EXAMINATION OF THE LUBELL THESIS

Samuel Lubell has advanced the proposition that ethnic background was responsible for the sharp decline in the Democratic vote of certain counties of the United States in the 1940 presidential election. Lubell feels these counties rejected Roosevelt because he was leading America into war against Germany, their homeland. This study has focused on one of those counties, McIntosh county, in an attempt to determine the reasons for the change in Democratic support in that country. The research for this paper has shown factors other than ethnicity, such as natural conditions, economic desperation, and dislike for all war as causes for the declining Democratic support from 1936 to 1940 in McIntosh county.

In order to test the validity of Lubell's thesis, a statistical study was undertaken. Statistical research requires variables that can be quantified. A historical study, however, often cannot obtain data on important attitudes and conditions that might be possible under current conditions. For example, general population or voter attitudes toward war cannot be obtained retrospectively for the entire population. Some relevant aspects, however, can be quantified. Economic factors, which may have a relationship to the political shift of 1940, can be quantified, and they were included in the study. Traditional Republicanism is also indicated as a factor in the political decision of 1940, and it was included in the study. The final major element in the

statistical study was ethnicity, the fact that Lubell believes most important.

The statistical approach chosen for this study was a multiple regression analysis. The procedure and program using the multiple regression approach were prepared by the Computer Center of the University of North Dakota. The multiple regression technique compares the relative strengths of one or more independent variables with a dependent variable. It indicates which independent variables have the greatest effect on the dependent.

There were three groups of variables in this regression analysis: ethnic, political, and economic. The ethnic variables represented German-Russian, Reich German, and Norwegian percentages of the population. The political variables represented voting patterns. The economic variables reflected farm income.¹ These variables were compiled for McIntosh county and twenty-six other counties comprising a homogeneous economic, geologic, and geographic area of central North Dakota.² This

¹For a detailed description of the variables, see Appendix F.

²Bernt Lloyd Wills, North Dakota: The Northern Prairie State (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1963), pp. 31-32, 36-38, 116. The counties are in the area Professor Wills has labeled the Drift Prairies. The counties are: Barnes, Benson, Bottineau, Burke, Cavalier, Dickey, Eddy, Foster, Griggs, Kidder, LaMoure, Logan, McHenry, McIntosh, Nelson, Pierce, Ramsey, Ransom, Renville, Rolette, Sargent, Sheridan, Steele, Stutsman, Towner, Ward, and Wells. This area has some diversification in its ethnic composition; most of the counties have large German-Russian populations, but some have large groups of Scandinavian people. Burke county proved the most deviant of all twenty-seven counties, accounting for up to one-fourth of the total deviation in some of the computer runs. There was no apparent reason for this trait in the county, and in some of the runs it was left out in order to get a more accurate picture of the variable-interaction.

region's composition makes it ideal for statistical study because its uniformity reduces the chances of unexplained variability.

When using the multiple regression analysis technique, the level of significance becomes very important because it indicates which independent variables had a recognizable influence on the dependent variable. In this study an independent variable was considered statistically significant when the appropriate test statistic showed at least a ± 2 value.³ The ± 2 level is an arbitrary standard used in interpreting individual multiple regression analyses. An independent variable that shows a relationship between ± 2 and -2 with a dependent variable is not considered to be significant; the more an independent variable deviates from ± 2 , the more significant it is. Thus, a -7 level is more significant than a -4 level, $+6$ is more significant than $+4$, and -11 is more significant than $+3$.

There are three acknowledged errors built into the study which cannot be removed. One involves the compilation of the income variables --there were few accurate, concrete income figures available. Compilations from Crop Reporting Service statistics included total production figures, but did not indicate how much of the crop had been marketed, stored or sold. Thus, the income figures may have been too high in

³A t value of approximately ± 2 is used, since such a value or greater would occur about 5 per cent of the time when there is no relationship between the dependent and independent variables in the entire universe or population. Although the text speaks of a standard of a t value of ± 2 , the more exact t values associated with the number of degrees of freedom available in this regression analysis (nineteen to twenty-six, depending on the number of independents tested) ranged from 1.71 to 2.09, depending on the kinds of expectations held prior to doing the analysis. For further discussion of this matter, see Taro Yamane, Statistics: An Introductory Analysis (2nd ed., New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 572-809.

some cases. A second error involves the lack of accurate figures for dairy and other livestock products. This tends to make the income figures too low. A third error involves labeling all county income as farm income, when some counties had populations earning non-farm incomes. The lack of figures for town dwellers forced the use of the crude farm income variables as the measure of county income.⁴

Turning to the specific results of the study, the most important was the overwhelming correlation between German-Russian ethnicity and the change in Democratic vote for president. This is what Lubell suggested, and it is the clearest finding of the study. The German-Russian variable never fell below -4, and at times was over -11 (the minus sign indicates as the Democratic vote declined, the per cent German-Russians increased, and vice versa), a very high level of significance. This indicates that Lubell uncovered a definite relationship between vote and ethnicity.

The other two ethnic groups tested, the Norwegians and the Reich Germans, also gave insight to the strength of the Lubell thesis. There was a positive relationship between the change in Democratic vote for president and the Norwegians of a county--that is, as the amount of the change decreased, there were more Norwegians in the county. Thus, the Norwegians were voting Democratic, while the German-Russians were voting Republican. There was no significant relationship between the change in vote and the Reich German population of a county--in fact, there was a positive relation between the change in Democratic vote and the percen-

⁴See Appendix F for a discussion of these variables.

tage of Germans in the county. Though the sample of Germans was small, the relationship of Germans and the vote for Roosevelt seriously threatens the validity of Lubell's thesis. If Lubell is correct, there should have been a significant relationship (± 2) between German ethnicity and change in Democratic vote for President, or if that was lacking, at least a negative relationship. Neither was the case in the German analysis. The German variable showed a +0.11 relationship with the change in vote.

The economic factors, though incompletely measured, indicate that they also influenced the change in the Democratic vote. The change in crop income from 1936 to 1940 is related significantly to the change in the vote, but the change in livestock income is not. It is hypothesized that poor livestock figures are responsible for the lack of relationship. Also, these counties appear to have relied on livestock for much of their income; the lack of good livestock figures causes the relationship between income and change in vote to appear smaller than it really was. The relationship between 1940 income and 1940 vote was not nearly as strong as the relationship between 1940 vote and German-Russian ethnicity. The relationship between 1940 income and 1940 vote was significant--over +2, indicating as the per cent Democratic change increased (the Democratic vote decreasing), the income also increased--but the relationship between German-Russian ethnicity and the vote was over -11, much more significant.⁵

⁵It is noteworthy that the counties with the higher percentages of German-Russians seemed to have the lower incomes; the deviant counties--those whose expected variation was poorly explained--tended to have

All twenty-seven counties show a drop in Democratic vote for president from 1936 to 1940. This decrease ranged from 13.8 percentage points to 48.1 percentage points; the average drop was 25.2 points, 27.1 if towns over 1,500 are removed. Removing the counties with the highest percentage of German-Russians in their populations still left an average drop of 20.2 percentage points. This indicates all counties were dissatisfied with Roosevelt, and the drop of 20.2 percentage points can be used as the change in a county attributable to general factors, exclusive of the war issue--if Lubell is right, the change in German-Russian counties should be due largely to the war; but if even non-German-Russian counties are changing 20.2 per cent toward Republicanism, then this same 20.2 per cent has to be removed from the change in German-Russian counties because it is a more general factor. Thus, a trend of a general Republican shift is uncovered, a trend Lubell fails to acknowledge.

The State Treasurer's office was selected as the measure of a traditional Republican voting pattern. This variable showed a Republican candidate for State Treasurer could expect at least 61 per cent of the vote in each of the twenty-seven counties (in McIntosh county, the candidate could expect 80.8 per cent of the vote, the highest of the twenty-seven counties). It is hypothesized that this variable indicates party loyalty, and represents party strength in the counties. When this

large German-Russian populations and lower incomes than the other counties. This situation may indicate that one reason the German-Russian counties had a larger change (drop) in their Democratic vote was because they had lower incomes.

variable was included with the income and German-Russian variables, the significance of the German-Russian variable was at its lowest point, -4.7. This traditional variable was also found to correlate over 60 per cent with the ethnic factor--that is, ethnicity (German-Russian) and Republicanism are 60 per cent interrelated. Thus, there is no possible way to test German-Russian ethnicity without including Republicanism. Using this traditional variable brought out the fact that some counties increased their vote for the Democratic candidate for treasurer from 1936 to 1940, while at the same time, their vote for Roosevelt was sharply declining. This indicates that if the war were an issue, it could not have applied to all Democratic candidates.

This statistical study has revealed some strengths and some weaknesses in Lubell's ethnic thesis. There is indication that he was right when he stated the German-Russians voted against Roosevelt because of their ethnic background. But there is also evidence that the ethnic thesis is faulty when applied to Reich Germans, a group it should definitely apply to. The study has also shown income factors to be important, and possibly they could show up even more significantly if it were possible to obtain accurate data. Traditional Republicanism also proved to be a significant factor in the voting change. The possibility that the German-Russians are Republicans throws serious doubt on the significance of the change in Democratic vote for president from 1936 to 1940.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Samuel Lubell advances an ethnic thesis of isolationism to explain the shift of many counties away from Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940 presidential election. Lubell believes that either pro-German sentiment or anti-British hostility caused these counties to vote for Wendell Willkie. He labels the German-Russians as the most isolationistic of all ethnic groups in America, and believes that the presence of a high concentration of these people explains the shift away from Roosevelt in McIntosh county, North Dakota. In other words, an ethnic reaction caused the massive shift of over 1,500 votes to the Republican column in the space of four years. Lubell says this reaction was caused by Roosevelt policies that seemed to be taking America into the European war against Germany: he had noted the German-Russian aversion to war, and he was satisfied that this trait was a factor in their rejection of Roosevelt. The purpose of this study was to investigate the conditions and attitudes of McIntosh county in order to determine if Lubell's ethnic thesis was valid. Attention was focused on the period from November of 1936 through November of 1940.

The research for this study led the author to believe there were non-ethnic factors involved in the political shift noted by Lubell. To test Lubell's ethnic variable against these non-ethnic variables, a statistical study was done. As previously noted, the outstanding finding of that study was the importance of the ethnic variable in the political

reversal of 1940. This finding would tend to disqualify the non-ethnic factors, if it were not for other discoveries made in that study. The most damaging blow to the ethnic postulation was the reaction of the German ethnic variable in the regression analysis. Not only did it prove insignificant in terms of strength of importance, but it also had the reverse relation expected from Lubell's thesis. It was also discovered that the German-Russian variable was correlated over 60 per cent with the traditional Republicanism variable. This tends to further diminish the importance of the ethnic relationship finding because it appears that measuring only ethnicity is not possible without including a large Republicanism factor in our study.

There is one additional consideration to be taken into account when attempting to analyze the significance of the ethnic relationship uncovered in the regression analysis. It was noted that the income factor, though poorly measured, showed some relationship to the vote. It was also noted that in all twenty-seven counties the farm income was low in 1936 and 1940. By choosing an area of fairly uniform income, I reduced much of the effect that the income factor may have had in the reversal of 1940. Both ethnic and income factors may have been important in the voting behavior of November 5, 1940. But because income was kept constant, the ethnic variable looked very impressive when coded in the regression analysis. If an area of diverse income levels and ethnicity were examined, the importance of these factors could be more easily discerned. But North Dakota in the late Thirties was a fairly uniform economic area, thus giving any analysis of the period a

"controlled" feature. When trying to test two variables, a researcher into North Dakota in the 1930's was really studying only one because the other was constant.

The non-computer findings also have important relevance when applied to Lubell's thesis. McIntosh county derives its economic livelihood from the agricultural pursuits of her people. Thus, one very important factor to consider in the political shift of 1940 is the income level of that period. Investigation showed that nature largely shaped agricultural success in McIntosh county in the late Thirties. In 1936, the drought ruined any chance of a crop; in 1937 and 1938, the combination of drought and grasshoppers again destroyed most of the county's crop. In 1939 there was a modest harvest because of better moisture conditions and less grasshopper damage. In 1940 the farmers of McIntosh county could say they had a real crop, not impressive when compared with normal harvests, but a bumper crop when compared with previous years. By November, 1940, there was a trend of returning prosperity.

Another economic trend was the decline in foreclosure proceedings. In 1936, 1937, and 1938, many McIntosh farmers found they could not pay their debts and faced legal seizure of their property by creditors. As conditions improved, however, the number of proceedings seemed to decrease, evidenced by the declining number of pleas for help. Many of the marginal farmers lost their holdings, but those who practiced sound farm management, though under severe economic pressure, managed to survive.

Closely tied to the economic factors in the shift in the vote is the role of government relief programs. It was a benevolent federal government that helped the McIntosh people in their fight for survival. The McIntosh farmers came to accept government management of their crops and land through the A.A.A. The people realized they could not make it on their own, and they were glad to have government supplements to their yearly income. The people accepted relief aid reluctantly, and they got off the relief rolls as soon as possible. The massive doses of federal monies did not convert the McIntosh citizens to the Democratic party that was administering those monies. The McIntosh people were fiercely independent, and they did not like to rely on anyone for anything. This independence must be considered when studying the causes of the shift of 1940. By November, 1940, this dependence on federal grants was declining.

The importance of the weather, the invading grasshoppers, the poor crops, foreclosure, and government policies are basic to a study of McIntosh county in the 1940 election because these factors lie behind the economic perspective of the people there. As these factors gradually improved from 1936 to 1940, the economic setting also improved. With their homes safe, a generous government willing to help them, and a good crop to provide needed income and seed, the McIntosh voter of 1940 was very different from the desperate voter of 1932 and 1936. The farmer had been through hard times, and by 1940, he was heading for, if not already at, economic independence. The improved economic conditions provide an important influence in the political decision of 1940, an influence that was not considered by Lubell.

The outbreak of the European war in September, 1939, activated the dominant trait of the German-Russian people of McIntosh county--their intense dislike for war. It is this trait that makes these people isolationists.¹ This study has never challenged the fact that the German-Russians were isolationist in 1940. In fact, attention was focused on the isolationistic editorials of the county newspapers during the 1939-1940 period. What is challenged is the belief that these people--because they are German-Russians--voted against Franklin Roosevelt in 1940 because they feared he was going to fight against their homeland. Lubell mentions their hatred for war as one of the qualities that makes them isolationists, but he stresses their ethnicity when trying to explain the shift from Roosevelt in 1940. I believe the emphasis should be reversed: the shift in 1940 is better explained by the German-Russian dislike for war than simply by the fact they are German-Russians. As clearly shown by the research in McIntosh county, there were no appeals made to ethnic sympathies by newspaper editors or by anyone writing a letter to the papers or to government officials. The dominant theme was "Stay out of the European war because it brings death", not "Stay out of the European war because we will have to fight Germany or Russia".

Lubell also stresses cultural insularity of these people as a source for their isolationism. But there were McIntosh people traveling

¹At least one author believes this trait may be applicable to all North Dakotans. Elwyn Robinson writes, "It is clear that North Dakotans persistently opposed war, whether it was against Imperial Germany in 1917, against Nazi Germany in 1939-41, or against Communist Russia and China in the postwar years." Robinson, North Dakota, p. 470.

to Germany, gathering first-hand impressions of the Nazi regime. Also, both county editors kept their readers well informed on world events, especially after the European conflict started. Appendix B shows a definite emphasis on education in the county, even in the worst years of the depression. It should not be forgotten that most McIntosh families had access to radios to help keep them informed on news events. It was no longer true that the German-Russians of McIntosh county were the "ethnic islands in the American sea". They had been successfully acculturated into the American system, and they were as well informed about national and international events as most people in the country. These people were definitely not isolationists because they were ill-informed or ignorant.

The political climate of the county was varied and turbulent in 1940. The importance of personalities, foreign policy, state leaders, and the peace-time draft in that election have been noted. But the factor that must be considered the most important political variable is the factor of traditional Republicanism. Many voters cited the swing back to the Republican party as a natural act, one not too noteworthy because the county had usually voted Republican. The noteworthy fact was that the county had supported Roosevelt in 1932 and 1936. McIntosh county is one of the strongest Republican centers in the state, and in 1944, it was the strongest in the nation. This traditional voting pattern was not acknowledged by Lubell. It is an omission that casts considerable doubt on the ethnic thesis of isolationism. For, it may be that the McIntosh voters in 1940 were not rejecting Roosevelt's foreign

policy at all, but rather, were returning to the political party that had always retained their support. In 1940 the people may have felt they no longer needed Roosevelt's help to survive because times were improving, and they went back to the party they felt most comfortable with.

There is one additional political element in the shift of 1940. That element is the role of William Langer. Langer was the trusted friend of the German-Russians, often going to great lengths to help them. When the people were in trouble, the man they turned to for help was Bill Langer. The tremendous following Langer had in McIntosh county is testimony to these people's enthusiasm for him. The county's leading politician, Bob Greiser, rose to political power on Langer's coattails. There seems to be evidence that Langer may have influenced the results of the national election of 1940 in the county.² In 1936, when he ran for governor as an independent, Langer apparently did not dwell upon the candidacy of Roosevelt or upon foreign policy.³ In 1940, Langer ran for the Senate as a Republican, and he did discuss foreign policy. His campaign literature called for a strong national defense program, limited aid to the Allies, and the repeated promise not to send Americans to die on European battlefields. Langer's strong stand against American involvement in the war and his popularity in McIntosh county contribute support to the statements of Wishek and Hernett. Is it

²See Chapter V, footnotes 106 and 107.

³See Chapter IV, footnote 41.

likely that a state politician can carry a national candidate to victory on his coattails? The political attention of the McIntosh voters in 1940 centered upon Langer's attempt to secure the nomination for U. S. Senator. Most of the political coverage in the county papers dealt with Langer, and very little space was devoted to the views of Wendell Willkie. Langer was definitely the most well-known candidate in the election. The fact that he was running on the Republican ticket added to Willkie's chances. As H. E. Timm noted, Willkie did not make much of an impression with the older people of the county. The man who did attract attention in McIntosh county was Bill Langer.

The influence of newspaper opinion on the election results of 1940 is difficult to measure. But both papers had wide circulation in the county and most people knew what had been published in the papers. The extreme opposition to Roosevelt displayed by Bob Greiser must be taken into account when analyzing the results of the 1940 election. It is true that Greiser opposed Roosevelt in 1936 and Roosevelt still carried the county, but the situation was different in 1940. In 1940 Roosevelt seemed preoccupied with foreign affairs; Greiser, realizing his readers' attitude toward war, preached a strong blend of isolationism and economics against Roosevelt's candidacy. It was much easier to vote against Roosevelt when he was pictured as a warmonger than when he still had the image of a saviour. The county papers discussed foreign affairs from a negative standpoint; the papers warned the people that the nation was on the verge of war, and that Roosevelt seemed determined to plunge America into the fray. This negative propaganda that was

attached to Roosevelt was another factor working against him in McIntosh county. It is another factor that Lubell has not discussed.

There seems to be a paradox in the material for this study. Statistically, Lubell's ethnic thesis appears to be at least partially correct. Use of more traditional historical research methods reveals there was no ethnic response in McIntosh county. Is this a reconcilable situation? The statistical approach represents research focusing on aggregate data, data representing county totals for income, vote, and ethnicity. The traditional approach represents research taken from more individual sources: personal letters, interviews, and newspaper accounts of daily life in McIntosh county. The phenomenon of aggregate versus individual results has been noted by other researchers⁴, and I believe this phenomenon must be considered when studying the opposing results from the statistical and traditional research methods. Essentially these two studies were not measuring the same sample of population, and some contradiction might be expected from such a circumstance. The ideal study relies on completely individual cases, but such a situation is impossible to obtain. Thus, a study which incorporates two different techniques of research is almost bound to include some contradictions.

⁴W. S. Robinson, "Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals," American Sociological Review, XV (June, 1950), 351-57; Leo A. Goodman, "Ecological Regressions and Behavior of Individuals," American Sociological Review, XVIII (December, 1953), 663-64; Otis Dudley Duncan and Beverly Davis, "An Alternate to Ecological Coorelation," American Sociological Review, XVIII (December, 1953), 665-69.

The study of voting behavior was pioneered by Samuel Lubell. As often happens when a new technique is attempted, errors occur. This pattern is evidenced by Lubell's work. By stressing ethnic background, Lubell ignored some of the most important variables that influence a political decision. The biggest omission was the traditional Republicanism of McIntosh county. A second variable ignored was the economic setting of the county. A third factor omitted was the role of newspaper coverage. A fourth omission was the influence that state politics, especially Bill Langer's candidacy, may have had in the electoral decision of November 5, 1940. The final shortcoming was the failure to stress the hatred for war that the German-Russians held. Any one of these factors could offset the importance of the ethnic variable.

APPENDIX A

ECONOMIC DATA

The economic picture of the McIntosh conditions is best told in a statistical review. The low prices and low production of the period 1936-1940 are vividly evident in the following tables. The effects of these conditions have already been revealed in the thoughts and words of the people, but the reasons for those words can only be appreciated after studying the economic ledger for those years.

There are some notable facts that can be gleaned from these tables. First, and most important, is the fact that 1940 was the best year for crops in all cases except for hay (1937 being the best year for hay production). Second is the production-price relationship. When prices were highest, 1936 and 1937, production was the lowest; when prices were lowest, 1939 and 1940, production was highest. Third, with the exception of hay production, the McIntosh county yield per acre harvested was always under the norm for the rest of the state. Fourth, the relation between the environment and crop production is vividly evident. When comparing the number of acres harvested, with the number planted, it is obvious that something happened during the growing season to wipe out the crop. The impact of the drought and the grasshoppers is shown here. Fifth, the most important crop, in terms of production and income, was spring wheat. No other crop comes close to the value of spring wheat to the McIntosh farmers.

The production-price relationship noted for crop production holds true for livestock production, too. In 1936 and 1937 the prices were

high for sheep and hogs, while their production was low; the reverse situation is found with the data for 1940. This relationship for cattle is more confusing because a breakdown on the number of beef and dairy animals is not given, but we may assume the situation is the same as already noted in other areas. Another important trend is the declining price of livestock products: the prices of hogs, sheep and horses were lower in 1940 than in 1936. Again, the lack of data for cattle prevents a true assessment, but the definite increase in beef prices is noteworthy. A third trend is the increase in livestock totals from 1936 to 1940 for all animals except horses (which suffered with increased farm mechanization). This would indicate that farmers turned to alternate sources of income to supplement their low crop incomes.

Table 13 sums up the conclusions drawn from the other three tables. Note the peak years in all cases were 1936 and 1937, when conditions were the worst. Also note the increase in the indices for all products in 1940 from the preceeding year, with the exception of dairy products. The higher prices found in livestock raising are evident in the average of the indices for the period.

From Tables 14, 15, and 16, it is obvious that the majority of the farms in McIntosh county were valued under \$2,500, there were a large number of tenants (42.3 per cent) among the farmers, and most of the farms were between 260 and 1000 acres in size. Thus, there were few wealthy farmers owning great amounts of land in the county.

TABLE 1

ACREAGE, YIELD, PRODUCTION FOR ALL WHEAT

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
<u>Acres Planted</u>					
McIntosh County	162,000	119,000	118,000	112,000	125,000
North Dakota	10,810,000	9,583,000	9,643,000	7,677,000	8,444,000
<u>Acres Harvested</u>					
McIntosh County	4,000	58,000	20,000	90,000	122,000
North Dakota	3,699,000	6,725,000	8,082,000	7,236,000	8,025,000
<u>Yields (Bushels) Per Harvested Acre</u>					
McIntosh County	1.2	2.1	2.7	6.2	8.1
North Dakota	5.2	8.2	9.0	10.5	11.6
<u>Production (Bushels)</u>					
McIntosh County	5,000	124,000	54,000	556,000	983,000
North Dakota	19,235,000	54,984,000	72,719,000	75,753,000	92,745,000

Source: North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Wheat, Ag. Statistics No. 3 (April, 1960), pp. 22-24.

TABLE 2

ACREAGE, YIELD, PRODUCTION FOR DURUM WHEAT

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
<u>Acres Planted</u>					
McIntosh County	7,000	4,000	8,000	21,000	18,000
North Dakota	2,683,000	2,350,000	2,844,000	2,560,000	2,662,000
<u>Acres Harvested</u>					
McIntosh County	---	2,000	3,000	18,000	17,000
North Dakota	1,261,000	2,093,000	2,616,000	2,444,000	2,370,000
<u>Yields (Bushels) Per</u>					
<u>Harvested Acre</u>					
McIntosh County	---	3.0	4.0	6.9	9.0
North Dakota	5.2	11.0	11.5	10.8	10.5
<u>Production (Bushels)</u>					
McIntosh County	---	6,000	12,000	124,000	153,000
North Dakota	6,557,000	23,023,000	30,084,000	26,395,000	24,885,000

Source: North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Wheat, Ag. Statistics No. 3 (April, 1960), pp. 50-52.

TABLE 3

ACREAGE, YIELD, PRODUCTION FOR OTHER SPRING WHEAT

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
<u>Acres Planted</u>					
McIntosh County	155,000	115,000	110,000	91,000	107,000
North Dakota	8,127,000	7,233,000	6,799,000	5,117,000	5,782,000
<u>Acres Harvested</u>					
McIntosh County	4,000	56,000	17,000	72,000	105,000
North Dakota	2,438,000	4,632,000	5,466,000	4,792,000	5,655,000
<u>Yields (Bushels) Per Harvested Acre</u>					
McIntosh County	1.2	2.1	2.5	6.0	7.9
North Dakota	5.2	6.9	7.8	10.3	12.0
<u>Production (Bushels)</u>					
McIntosh County	5,000	118,000	42,000	432,000	830,000
North Dakota	12,678,000	31,961,000	42,635,000	49,358,000	67,860,000

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Source: North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Wheat, Ag. Statistics No. 3 (April, 1960), pp. 76-78.

TABLE 4
ACREAGE, YIELD, PRODUCTION FOR FLAXSEED

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
<u>Acres Planted</u>					
McIntosh County	35,000	19,000	4,000	1,000	10,000
North Dakota	1,324,000	596,000	340,000	404,000	679,000
<u>Acres Harvested</u>					
McIntosh County	---	---	---	1,000	7,000
North Dakota	214,000	278,000	250,000	329,000	612,000
<u>Yields (Bushels) Per Harvested Acre</u>					
McIntosh County	---	---	---	3.0	2.3
North Dakota	2.7	5.3	5.0	5.1	6.0
<u>Production (Bushels)</u>					
McIntosh County	---	---	---	3,000	16,000
North Dakota	578,000	1,473,000	1,250,000	1,678,000	3,672,000

Source: North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Flaxseed and Soybeans, Ag. Statistics No. 2 (August, 1959), pp. 17-19.

TABLE 5

ACREAGE, YIELD, PRODUCTION FOR HAY

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
<u>Acres Harvested</u>					
McIntosh County	1,000	27,000	12,000	16,000	17,000
North Dakota	1,279,000	1,068,000	1,211,000	1,113,000	999,000
<u>Yields (Tons) Per Harvested Acre</u>					
McIntosh County	.51	1.45	.95	1.20	1.35
North Dakota	.60	1.01	1.10	1.04	1.11
<u>Production (Tons)</u>					
McIntosh County	510	39,000	11,000	19,000	23,000
North Dakota	767,000	1,079,000	1,332,000	1,158,000	1,107,000

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Source: North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Corn, Potatoes and Hay, Ag. Statistics, No. 9 (February, 1963), pp. 51-53.

TABLE 6

ACREAGE, YIELD, PRODUCTION FOR OATS

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
<u>Acres Planted</u>					
McIntosh County	15,000	17,000	15,000	17,000	21,000
North Dakota	2,023,000	1,861,000	1,656,000	1,722,000	1,963,000
<u>Acres Harvested</u>					
McIntosh County	---	7,000	4,000	13,000	18,000
North Dakota	437,000	1,311,000	1,390,000	1,565,000	1,722,000
<u>Yields (Bushels) Per</u>					
<u>Harvested Acre</u>					
McIntosh County	---	5.0	7.0	17.8	16.5
North Dakota	17.0	22.5	22.5	22.5	20.5
<u>Production (Bushels)</u>					
McIntosh County	---	35,000	28,000	231,000	297,000
North Dakota	4,807,000	29,498,000	31,275,000	35,212,000	35,301,000

Source: North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Barley, Oats, and Rye 1919-1954, Ag. Statistics No. 5 (December, 1960), pp. 25-27.

TABLE 7

ACREAGE, YIELD, PRODUCTION FOR BARLEY

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
<u>Acres Planted</u>					
McIntosh County	38,000	43,000	35,000	28,000	34,000
North Dakota	2,102,000	1,892,000	1,608,000	1,817,000	2,071,000
<u>Acres Harvested</u>					
McIntosh County	---	17,000	5,000	22,000	31,000
North Dakota	476,000	1,280,000	1,254,000	1,633,000	1,747,000
<u>Yields (Bushels) Per</u>					
<u>Harvested Acre</u>					
McIntosh County	---	5.0	4.0	12.9	11.9
North Dakota	9.5	16.5	17.0	17.2	16.0
<u>Production (Bushels)</u>					
McIntosh County	---	85,000	20,000	284,000	363,000
North Dakota	4,522,000	21,120,000	21,318,000	28,088,000	27,952,000

Source: North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Barley, Oats, and Rye 1919-1954, Ag. Statistics No. 5 (December, 1960), pp. 8-10.

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TABLE 8

PRICE AND INCOME FROM SELECTED CROPS 1936-1940

	Price (Dollars) Per Bushel	Income (Production Times Price)
All Wheat		
1936	1.17	\$ 5,850
1937	.94	116,560
1938	.53	28,620
1939	.70	389,200
1940	.67	658,610
Durum Wheat		
1936	1.14	---
1937	.85	5,100
1938	.50	6,000
1939	.67	83,080
1940	.64	97,920
Other Spring Wheat		
1936	1.19	5,850
1937	1.01	111,460
1938	.55	22,620
1939	.72	306,120
1940	.68	560,690
Flaxseed		
1936	1.82	---
1937	1.81	---
1938	1.52	---
1939	1.45	4,350
1940	1.32	21,120
Oats		
1936	.39	---
1937	.22	7,700
1938	.16	4,880
1939	.23	53,130
1940	.21	62,370

TABLE 8--Continued

	Price (Dollars) Per Bushel	Income (Production Times Price)
Barley		
1936	.63	---
1937	.40	\$ 34,000
1938	.26	5,200
1939	.29	82,360
1940	.29	105,270

^aNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Wheat, Ag. Statistics No. 3 (April, 1960), pp. 7, 22-24.

^bIbid., pp. 42, 50-52.

^cIbid., pp. 68, 76-78.

^dNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Flaxseed and Soybeans, Ag. Statistics No. 2 (August, 1959), pp. 5, 17-19.

^eNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Barley, Oats, and Rye 1919-1954, Ag. Statistics No. 5 (December, 1960), pp. 18, 25-27.

^fIbid., pp. 1, 8-10.

TABLE 9

CATTLE PRODUCTION AND VALUE 1936-1940

	All Cattle ^a		Beef Cattle, Price Per 100 Pound Liveweight ^b	Cows and Heifers Kept for Milking ^c		Price Farm Churned Butter (Cents Per Pound) ^d
	M.C.	N.D.		M.C.	N.D.	
1936	20,000	1,329,000	\$5.00	13,500	584,000	31
1937	19,500	1,170,000	6.40	12,000	521,000	33
1938	19,000	1,158,000	6.00	11,000	496,000	27
1939	19,000	1,193,000	6.30	10,000	496,000	24
1940	22,000	1,313,000	6.80	11,000	520,000	28

^aNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, County Estimates, 1925-61, North Dakota Livestock, Ag. Statistics No. 7 (January, 1962), p. 9.

^bNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Price Trends in North Dakota 1910-1957 (February, 1958), p. 21.

^cNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Livestock, 1925-1961, Ag. Statistics No. 7 (January, 1962), p. 15.

^dNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Price Trends in North Dakota 1910-1957 (February, 1958), p. 31.

TABLE 10
SHEEP PRODUCTION AND VALUE 1936-1940

	All Cattle ^a		Sheep, Price Per 100	Lams, Price Per 100
	M.C.	N.D.	Pound Liveweight ^b	Pound Liveweight ^c
1936	7,500	851,000	\$3.55	\$7.50
1937	7,500	822,000	3.85	8.20
1938	8,000	822,000	3.30	6.50
1939	8,500	851,000	3.40	7.30
1940	11,000	958,000	3.20	7.50

^aNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, County Estimates, 1925-61, North Dakota Livestock, Ag. Statistics No. 7 (January, 1962), p. 35.

^bNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Price Trends in North Dakota 1910-1957 (February, 1958), p. 32.

^cIbid., p. 33.

TABLE 11

HORSE PRODUCTION AND VALUE 1936-1940

	Number of Horses ^a		Price Per Head ^b
	M.C.	N.D.	
1936	9,000	463,000	\$84
1937	8,500	421,000	82
1938	8,500	387,000	74
1939	8,000	360,000	69
1940	8,000	360,000	65

^aNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, County Estimates, 1925-61, North Dakota Livestock, Ag. Statistics No. 7 (January, 1962), p. 42.

^bNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Price Trends in North Dakota 1910-1957 (February, 1958), p. 40.

TABLE 12

HOG PRODUCTION AND VALUE 1936-1940

	Number of Hogs ^a		Price Per 100 Pound Liveweight ^b
	M.C.	N.D.	
1936	6,000	345,000	\$8.20
1937	5,000	259,000	8.70
1938	5,500	311,000	6.90
1939	4,500	330,000	5.40
1940	6,500	464,000	4.70

^aNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, County Estimates, 1925-61, North Dakota Livestock, Ag. Statistics No. 7 (January, 1962), p. 25.

^bNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Price Trends in North Dakota 1910-1957 (February, 1958), p. 22.

TABLE 13
 INDEX OF PRICES RECEIVED BY NORTH DAKOTA
 FARMERS FOR FARM PRODUCTS
 1936-1940^a (1910-1914=100)

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	Average
All Commodities	112	127	88	82	88	99.4
All Crops	108	128	75	69	76	91.2
Feed Grains and Hay	84	103	61	58	60	73.2
All Livestock	118	126	109	104	109	113.2
Meat Animals	118	133	117	116	116	120
Dairy Products	121	126	103	94	110	110.8

^aNorth Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service,
Price Trends in North Dakota 1910-1957 (February, 1958), pp. 43-52.

TABLE 14
FARM SIZE FOR MCINTOSH COUNTY, 1940^a

Farms	McIntosh County	North Dakota
Under 3 acres	---	92
3 - 9 acres	1	583
10 - 29 acres	1	820
30 - 49 acres	6	718
50 - 69 acres	3	333
70 - 99 acres	17	1,114
100 - 139 acres	12	742
140 - 179 acres	47	9,673
180 - 219 acres	14	1,425
220 - 259 acres	39	3,066
260 - 379 acres	198	16,658
380 - 499 acres	261	12,962
500 - 699 acres	306	10,970
700 - 999 acres	157	8,401
1000 - acres and over	56	6,405

^aU. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture: 1945, I, 92-95.

TABLE 15
FARM VALUE FOR MCINTOSH COUNTY, 1940^a

Value	McIntosh County (Number)	North Dakota (Number)
Under \$250	114	5,473
0	28	673
\$ 1 to 99	31	1,775
100 to 249	55	4,025
250 to 399	77	4,823
400 to 599	174	7,017
600 to 999	402	13,881
1,000 to 1,499	246	14,051
1,500 to 2,499	78	15,409
2,500 to 3,999	9	7,746
4,000 to 5,999	2	2,755
6,000 to 9,999	1	1,077
10,000 and over	1	374
10,000 to \$19,999	1	295
20,000 and over	---	79

^aU. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture: 1945, I, 98-99.

TABLE 16
FARM OPERATORS FOR MCINTOSH COUNTY, 1940^a

	McIntosh County	North Dakota
Number of All Farm Operators	1,118	73,962
Number of Full Owners	209	18,651
Number of Part Owners	434	21,740
Number of Managers	2	194
Number of All Tenants	473	33,377
Proportion of Tenancy	42.3%	45.1%
Number of Cash Tenants	34	3,411
Number of Share-Cash Tenants	304	11,400
Number of Share Tenants and Croppers	126	17,464
Number of Other and Unspecified Tenants	9	1,102

^aU. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Agriculture: 1945, I, 89, 91.

904
EINTON'S
(GOLFABLE)
(BOND)
13A
COPKIN
COTTON FIBER CONTENT

APPENDIX B

EDUCATION IN MCINTOSH COUNTY, 1936-1941

Table 17 conclusively demonstrates the majority of the pupils going to school in McIntosh county from 1936-1940 received their education in rural school houses. Those who finished the 8th grade were evenly divided between rural schools and town schools. The overwhelming majority who went to high school did so in town schools. The effects of the Depression are clearly shown in the enrollment figures. The worst year, 1936, showed the highest enrollment (2,506). The next four years showed a steadily decreasing enrollment--1937's was 2,500, 1938's was 2,484, 1939's was 2,443 and 1940's was 2,397--and this would be expected, as the general population of the county showed a decrease for these years. The importance of these figures lies in the fact that so many children were sent to school. There was a definite attempt to keep the children in school, even in the worst years of the depression, as shown by the statistics cited in Table 17. Another trend is the movement from rural schools to town schools; this resulted when districts were unable to pay teachers and had to consolidate to keep operating.

The statistics on the libraries show the value placed on books by the McIntosh people. Note the total number of books increased over the period. Also note that though the funds for buying books were cut during the worst years, the library allocation was still kept in the school budget; when prosperity returned in 1940, the budget immediately grew. Inference from these figures should lead the analyzer to the conclusion that education was valued by the German-Russians of McIntosh county and that if there was opposition to education earlier in the century, it had been overcome by the late 1930's.

TABLE 17
 NUMBER OF PUPILS ATTENDING RURAL AND TOWN
 SCHOOLS, MCINTOSH COUNTY, 1936-1941

	McIntosh County	North Dakota
<hr/>		
Total Number Rural Schools		
1936-47 ^a	99	4,000
1937-38	100	3,802
1938-39	98	3,655
1939-40 ^b	82	3,392
1940-41 ^c	85	3,339
Total Enrolled in Rural Schools		
1936-37	1,348	51,268
1937-38	1,278	47,685
1938-39	1,214	45,508
1939-40	1,145	45,693
1940-41	1,105	42,516
Total Number Pupils Completing 8th Grade in Rural Schools		
1936-37	122	4,740
1937-38	90	5,904
1938-39	89	6,070
1939-40	78	6,086
1940-41	100	4,258
Total Number Enrolled in Graded Schools in Towns		
1936-37	1,158	88,581
1937-38	1,222	88,282
1938-39	1,270	90,419
1939-40	1,298	88,094
1940-41	1,292	88,338
Total Number Pupils Completing 8th Grade in Graded Schools in Towns		
1936-37	83	5,883
1937-38	90	5,904
1938-39	89	6,010
1939-40	78	6,086
1940-41	77	6,033
Total Number Pupils Doing High School Work in One Room Schools		
1936-37	8	164
1937-38	11	182
1938-39	6	147
1939-40	3	169
1940-41	---	127

TABLE 17--Continued

	McIntosh County	North Dakota
Total Number Pupils Doing High School Work in Graded Schools in Town		
1936-37	355	32,082
1937-38	417	30,745
1938-39	453	33,284
1939-40	498	33,202
1940-41	508	33,079

^aNorth Dakota, Twenty-Fifth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for period ending June 30, 1938, pp. 50-61, 92, 103. These pages give data for 1936-37 and 1937-38 found in the table.

^bNorth Dakota, Twenty-Sixth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for period ending June 30, 1940, pp. 48-59, 90-101. These pages give data for 1938-39 and 1939-40 found in the tables.

^cNorth Dakota, Twenty-Seventh Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for period ending June 30, 1942, pp. 49-60. These pages give data for 1940-41 found in the tables.

REPORT OF MCINTOSH WELFARE BOARD

The following material was taken from the Board's report to William Lemke, April 8, 1940, found in Lemke Papers, Box 19, Folder 11. The board surveyed 211 WPA cases, representing 56.4% of the total WPA load, and 10% of the total population of the county. The total number of persons accounted for in the survey was 968. The board noted, "Many persons believe that with the return of normal times all of these individuals can be absorbed as productive units in society without extensive social planning." In relation to this point, it was observed that:

- A. Only 53 of these 211 family heads have any skill other than farming or farm labor. . . .
- B. For the remaining 158 who are without training there would be only common labor, and this is already the most crowded section of the labor market.
- C. Many of these individuals are handicapped by a lack of education. Fifty-six have had no schooling or only 1 to 4 grades in rural schools. One Hundred Thirty-one have had from 5 to 8 grades and 24 from 9 years to as much as 3 years in state teacher's colleges.

The Board made the following suggestions:

- 1. A form of federal insurance of chattel mortgages so that local banks may make such loans with safety to these clients.
- 2. A definite effort to liberalize and speed up the FSA administration in making resettlement loans to this group, loans for both stock and land.
- 3. Secure cooperation of Bank of North Dakota and Federal Land Bank officials for providing farms under favorable leasing arrangements for those clients.
- 4. Utilization of any lands belonging to the county suitable for resettlement of these families.
- 5. The stimulation of local interest in the problem to the end that all local resources, county as well as state, can be made available.
- 6. A further study of the medical, dental and optical needs for proposals to protect the future health of the county, either through employment of county doctors, and dentists, or the establishment of cooperative medical, hospital, and dental service with county participation in the cost.

7. The realization by all persons that the WPA wage of approximately \$500.00 per year is not sufficient, but if the amount of two to four years wages, \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00, could be invested by some of these clients in a farm enterprise, they would have a chance to again become productive, self-supporting units of our community.

The survey also listed tenure on WPA projects: 13 men had worked 6 months or less, 7 had worked 6 to 12 months, 1 had worked 12 to 18 months, and 190 had worked 18 months or longer on WPA projects.

The Statistics on indebtedness are also striking. Of the 211 families, 2 reported they were free of debt, 57 had debts of \$50.00 or less, 44 had \$50.00 to \$100.00 debts and 108 had debts from \$100.00 to \$3,000.00.

RELIEF DATA

The following tables have been included to illustrate the extreme importance federal and state relief programs played in McIntosh county. The most important statistics are those that show the percentage of people receiving relief; in some instances, this figure was over 70 per cent of the people in the county.

There are several trends to be noted in Table 18. First, the total number of cases usually increased in the fall and winter months. Second, the worst years seemed to have been 1936, 1937, and 1938. Third, there were more people relying on R.R.A.-F.S.A. aid in all years except 1940. This may have changed in 1940 because of the improved crop conditions of that year. Fourth, the re-assignment of certain W.P.A. cases to the R.R.A. in 1936 is readily apparent in the drop in the W.P.A. figures in that year.

TABLE 18

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION RECEIVING WORK RELIEF, DIRECT RELIEF, OR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
THROUGH FEDERAL, STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, OCTOBER 1936-NOVEMBER 1940^a

	1936		1937		1938		1939		1940	
	M.C. %	N.D. %	M.C. %	N.D. %	M.C. %	N.D. %	M.C. %	N.D. %	M.C. %	N.D. %
January			64.4	38.2	64.8	35.7	66.5	35.6	24.7	17.1
February			66.7	38.2	66.4	35.7	65.7	35.2	27.3	17.5
March			68.2	38.2	54.6	34.5	64.1	33.1	24.5	15.2
April			34.4	38.2	57.3	33.5	63.2	28.2	20.5	13.9
May			38.6	38.2	57.8	31.2	50.4	22.1	19.7	12.4
June			43.8	38.2	61.6	28.6	33.7	18.9	17.4	12.0
July			39.9	38.2	65.0	26.6	61.9	28.9	17.3	---
August			39.8	38.2	66.8	24.7	16.3	11.3	18.2	---
September			32.1	24.7	67.9	25.3	23.5	12.2	19.6	12.7
October	71.9	38.2	61.3	28.6	66.3	29.6	23.4	12.4	19.9	
November	70.7	38.2	63.5	31.9	67.9	32.8	25.9	14.0	23.5	
December	61.5	38.2	63.8	35.0	65.6	34.2	27.8	16.2		

^aNorth Dakota, Public Welfare Board, Monthly Bulletin on Public Relief Statistics, Vol. I No. 11 through Vol. V No. 11 (November 1936-November, 1940).

TABLE 19

NUMBER OF CASES RECEIVING EMPLOYMENT WITH W.P.A., R.R.A. (F.S.A.),
C.C.C. AND N.Y.A. NOVEMBER 1936-NOVEMBER 1940^a

	W.P.A.		R.R.A.		C.C.C.		N.Y.A.	
	M.C.	N.D.	M.C.	N.D.	M.C.	N.D.	M.C.	N.D.
1936								
November	1,272	51,516	157	14,054	107	---	95	---
December	374	26,898	707	23,864	105	---	113	---
1937								
January	377	20,769	933	32,738	104	---	103	---
February	387	18,498	977	36,531	105	---	83	---
March	408	18,962	927	37,242	105	---	83	---
April	405	19,916	313	35,124	113	---	83	---
May	397	18,915	401	30,095	104	---	90	---
June	345	16,768	560	25,088	80	---	53	---
July	345	14,364	456	20,432	80	---	53	---
F.S.A.								
August	---	11,162	462	18,599	---	---	---	---
September	---	10,886	730	20,155	---	---	---	---
October	299	10,599	899	24,789	---	---	---	---
November	304	11,867	932	27,704	---	4,653	---	1,885
December	273	13,197	949	30,679	---	4,585	---	2,155
1938								
January	314	14,880	929	31,156	96	4,487	62	2,254
February	320	15,458	952	30,677	90	3,709	63	2,368
March	356	15,677	674	29,089	84	2,809	64	2,365
April	330	15,556	768	27,949	87	3,115	43	2,050
May	338	15,586	781	25,016	87	3,003	52	2,209
June	350	15,575	840	21,295	85	2,818	67	2,543
July	383	15,137	884	19,042	91	2,876	70	2,613
August	436	14,393	866	17,086	89	2,598	85	2,598
September	539	15,605	795	16,869	63	2,192	96	2,592
October	648	18,096	649	20,329	81	2,886	75	2,524
November	496	17,227	835	25,526	80	2,857	94	3,203
December	359	15,072	921	29,255	74	2,767	110	3,662

TABLE 19--Continued

	W.P.A.		F.S.A.		C.C.C.		N.Y.A.	
	M.C.	N.D.	M.C.	N.D.	M.C.	N.D.	M.C.	N.D.
1939								
January	358	14,675	935	30,924	73	2,672	101	3,841
February	362	14,715	915	30,199	73	2,682	59	3,214
March	340	14,887	892	26,971	73	2,697	62	3,061
April	361	14,027	853	21,237	56	2,440	64	2,893
May	325	13,706	633	13,001	56	2,395	67	2,410
June	355	13,759	255	8,273	53	2,155	22	1,553
July	414	15,108	786	21,560	72	2,601	75	2,844
August	149	6,686	131	4,452	67	2,384	80	2,065
September	325	10,149	92	2,394	41	1,927	83	1,985
October	328	10,313	88	2,020	53	2,559	73	2,380
November	354	11,565	87	2,485	52	2,525	75	2,458
1940								
January	281	15,322	157	3,946	50	2,511	53	2,961
February	394	15,948	104	3,669	50	2,472	80	3,227
March	340	13,560	86	2,831	29	1,406	96	3,510
April	293	11,646	39	2,347	41	2,460	97	3,590
May	274	10,316	34	1,793	38	2,362	85	2,992
June	216	8,923	23	1,379	36	2,284	39	2,411
July	244	9,838	17	1,031	29	2,373	12	806
August	286	8,948	13	868	27	2,214	13	754
September	301	9,950	16	518	26	2,058	14	1,088
October	297	10,390	15	567	28	2,142	18	1,284
November	316	11,165	24	789	28	2,091	21	1,362

^aFigures for W.P.A., N.Y.A., R.R.A.-F.S.A., and C.C.C. for McIntosh County, November 1936-July 1937, came from the Wishek News, December 24, 1936, p. 1, March 18, 1937, p. 1., April 29, 1937, p. 1, May 20, 1937, p. 1, June 24, 1937, p. 1, and August 19, 1937, p. 8. The rest of the statistics came from North Dakota, Public Welfare Board, Monthly Bulletin of Public Relief Statistics, Vol. II No. 10 through Vol. V. No. 11 (October 1937-November 1940). North Dakota C.C.C. figures for July through December 1937 came from Annual Report of the Director of the Civilian Conservation Corp., period ending June 30, 1938, p. 89. Where data is missing, it was unobtainable.

SLOGANS FROM THE WISHEK NEWS

The following slogans were printed above the banner of the Wishek News after war broke out in 1939.

"We should be more concerned in servicing the American public than saving the European Democracies"

September 21, 1939

"'America to the Rescue' is being shouted all around us, by the war mongers"

October 5, 1939

"No American by his honor is bound to bear his bosom to German bayonets in defense of English interests"

October 12, 1939

"Let us hurl back the ideologies of Europe like our rock-ribbed shores hurl back the waters of the sea"

October 19, 1939

"Peace crowns homes with joy; war turns them into sanctuaries of sorrow, bleeding hearts and tears"

October 26, 1939

"An insidious war campaign, with crooked facts and false reasoning may break a million mother's hearts"

November 2, 1939

"We don't like to see people killed, but we supply the instruments for the killing--we are not neutral as long as we help draw blood from human beings in Europe"

November 2, 1939

"Fifty thousand American boys sleep on Flanders Fields because a wicked, secret element put hatred, greed and ambition above the mother heart of the world"

November 16, 1939

"Can the United States afford to go into another war with a debt of forty billions?"

November 23, 1939

"Defeat isn't bitter to the self-made man because he refuses to swallow it"

November 30, 1939

"For a better nation--keep American dollars at home and American soldiers off European battlefields"

December 7 and 14, 1939

"Another world war would be an unpardonable sin against millions of unborn Americans"

January 4 and 11, 1940

From these quotes, it is obvious Greiser did not want America to become involved in the war. He could, therefore, be classified as an isolationist, but ethnic causation does not seem apparent in his outlook.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIABLES USED IN THE STATISTICAL STUDY

A total of twenty variables for the three classes of variables was tested. The ethnic variables were: per cent German-Russian in 1930--foreign-born and native born of foreign-born parents¹; per cent German-Russian in 1930--foreign born²; per cent German-Russian in 1940--foreign-born³; per cent Norwegian in 1940--foreign-born⁴; and per cent German in 1940--foreign-born⁵. The political variables were: change in Democratic percentage of the Presidential vote, 1936-1940⁶; change in Democratic percentage of the Presidential vote, 1936-1940, without the vote of towns over 1,500 in population; per cent Democratic in 1940⁷; change in

¹U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Population, Vol. III, pt. 2, pp. 428-29.

²Ibid.

³U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940: Population, Vol. II, pt. 5, pp. 471-72.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Richard M. Scammon, ed., America at the Polls: A Handbook of American Presidential Election Statistics, 192-1964 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1965), p. 339. To get the percentages for towns over 1,500, I wrote to county auditors and checked official county newspapers for the election results of these towns. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the auditors from the following counties: Bottineau, Cavalier, Dickey, Foster, Pierce, Ransom, Ward, and Wells. The newspapers used were: New Rockford Transcript, Valley City Times Record, Jamestown Sun, Devils Lake World, and the Oakes Times.

⁷Ibid.

Democratic percentage for State Treasurer, 1936-1940⁸; change in Democratic vote for President, 1936-1940, expressed as a proportion; per cent Democratic in 1940, without the vote of towns over 1,500 in population; and traditional Republicanism⁹. The income variables were: 1940 income per farm¹⁰; change in farm income per farm, 1936-1940; per cent livestock cash receipts of total cash receipts for 1940¹¹; per cent livestock and other cash receipts of total cash receipts for 1940; change in crop income per farm, 1936-1940; change in livestock income per farm, 1936-1940; and per cent other cash receipts of total cash receipts for 1940.

A brief explanation of some of the variables is in order at this point. There are two different types of census data available on ethnic background. The 1930 data includes totals for foreign-born, and for

⁸Compilation 1930.

⁹Compilation 1914; Compilation 1930.

¹⁰The income figures for variables dealing with absolute farm income figures are based on calculations taken from the following sources: North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Wheat, Ag. Statistics No. 3 (April, 1960), pp. 22-24; North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Flax and Soybeans, Ag. Statistics No. 2 (August, 1959), pp. 17-19; North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Barley, Oats, and Rye: 1919-1954, Ag. Statistics No. 5 (December, 1960), pp. 8-10, 25-27, 42-44; North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, North Dakota Livestock: 1925-1961; Ag. Statistics No. 7 (January, 1962), pp. 1, 9, 20, 25, 29, 35; North Dakota, North Dakota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Price Trends in North Dakota 1910-1957, (February, 1958), pp. 19, 21, 31-32, 40.

¹¹The percentage income figures are based on calculations taken from Census of Agriculture: 1945, pp. 38-48, 71-87.

foreign-born and native born of foreign-born parents; this second number is much larger than the first, often exceeding 50 per cent of a county's population. In 1940 this second figure was not available, but it was decided to retain the 1930 figures to see if it made any difference in the results of the study.

The Democratic percentage change variables were devised in this manner: in county X in 1936, the Democrats received 40 per cent of the vote; in 1940, they received 35 per cent. The percentage change variable for county X was recorded as -5. The proportional change variable was devised in this manner: in county X in 1936, the Democrats received 40 per cent of the vote; in 1940 they received 35 per cent. The proportional change variable for county X was recorded as thirty-five fortieths, or reduced to its simplest terms, seven-eighths. These two methods reflect two ways of examining the change in the vote: the absolute--porportional--change and the relative--percentage--change.

In order to see if town dwellers voted differently than rural citizens, the town votes were removed from the county total. The number 1,500 was chosen because McIntosh county had no town over 1,500 in the Thirties, and since McIntosh county can be classified as a rural area, it was decided that any town over 1,500 could be considered an urban area for the purpose of this study.

The office of State Treasurer was included to see what happened in an office where foreign policy issues were not important to a candidate. This office was also selected as an indicator of party vote, and it was used as the source of the traditional Republicanism variable. Because

this office attracted few charismatic candidates and was relatively uncontroversial, it was theorized this office would reflect the straight ticket voter quite well. It is realized that other state offices could also have been chosen as the source of this variable.

In order to check the change in farm income from 1936 to 1940, figures for those years were needed. Because the Census reports do not give complete income totals for those years, Crop Reporting Service statistics were used. It was realized these statistics were not highly accurate, but that they would give an approximate indication of the farm income. The crop income figures were computed by multiplying production totals by price per bushel; the livestock figures were obtained by multiplying the number of animals per farm by their respective value. The percentage cash receipts figures were taken from the Census reports because they reflected reasonably accurate percentages for 1939, and therefore, it was hoped, could serve as a check on the accuracy of the figures compiled from the Reporting Service statistics.

The use of these variables produced some interesting results on some occasions. For example, the census figures combining foreign-born and native born of foreign-born parents, and the figures using only foreign-born, were equally related to the change in Democratic vote for president; it made no difference if the figures represented 10 per cent or 50 per cent of the county's population, the ethnic relationship stayed high. Also, if the county had a large German-Russian population, the German and Norwegian groups were small, and vice versa. McIntosh county was the only county of the twenty-seven that had zero German and

Norwegian percentages. It was found that using the proportion vote variable was better than using the percentage variable--a greater amount of the variability was explained with the proportional figure. It was also discovered that using county votes with or without totals for towns over 1,500 made little difference in the regression analysis. However, taking the city vote out of the county vote tended to increase the change in Democratic vote: it appears that the rural areas were more Republican in 1940 than in 1936.

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